

PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM & IMPERIALISM IN KENYA

Includes A Portrait of Resistance: Karimi Nduthu



| Kenya Resists No.3 |



By Shiraz Durrani

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

People's Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism In Kenya And Reflections on Resistance

Selection from Shiraz Durrani's from Kenya's War of Independence: Mau Mau and its Legacy of Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism, 1948-1990 (2018, Nairobi: Vita Books).

And

A Portrait of Resistance: Karimi Nduthu

Presentations at the meeting to celebrate the revolutionary work of Karimi Nduthu held at the Professional Centre, Nairobi on March 24, 2018

**Kenya Resists
No. 3 (2018)**



VITA BOOKS



P.O Box 62501-00200

Nairobi. Kenya

<http://vitabooks.co.uk>

info.vitabkske@gmail.com; info@vitabooks.co.uk

Series: Kenya Resists No.3

Distributed Worldwide by:

African Books Collective

PO BOX 721

Oxford, OX1 9EN

orders@africanbookscollective.com

www.africanbookscollective.com

Copyright ©: Shiraz Durrani 2018

ISBN 978-9966-114-52-5 (Paper)

ISBN 978-9966-114-51-8 (eBook)



Dedicated to Karimi Nduthu and all those who sacrificed their lives
in the struggle for the liberation of Kenya.

Kenya Resists No. 3

Contents

Preface to the Series, Kenya Resists 7

Preface to Kenya Resists No. 3: People's Resistance 10

PART 1: PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE 12

THE COLONIAL PERIOD 12

The Somali Nationality 12

The Kamba Nationality 17

The Maasai Nationality 20

South Asian Kenyans 22

Women 35

RESISTANCE AFTER INDEPENDENCE 42

Three Pillars of Resistance 42

Worker Resistance 46

Peasant Resistance 50

Student Resistance 54

The Whole Nation Resists 58

Conclusion: Uhuru Bado 62

References and Further Reading 68

PART 2: REFLECTIONS ON RESISTANCE 71

The Question of Nationalities in Kenya: A Force for Unity, not Division 71

Capitalism and Socialism: Has the Contradiction been Resolved? 81

PART 3: A PORTRAIT OF RESISTANCE: KARIMI NDUTHU. 1961 - 1996 84

Karimi Nduthu, 1961-1996: Patriot and Revolutionary Democrat 84

Kang'ethe Mungai: Karimi Nduthu: Reflections on the Life of a Kenyan Hero 90

Abdilatif Abdalla: Ujumbe kwa Maadhimisho 95

Shiraz Durrani: Why We Can't Forget Karimi Nduthu 99

Shiraz Durrani: A Night to Remember, a Night to Forget 103

Appendix A: The Struggle For Kenya's Future 107

Appendix B: Shiraz Durrani: Class Struggle & Kenya's War of Independence p. 114

Preface to the Series, Kenya Resists

Looking Back to Fight Forward

People need to know their history in order to understand their past and present and chart out the desired outcomes for the future – in the tradition of “Looking back to fight forward”. But in a class divided society where people do not have the power to keep their history alive, those who do have power manipulate, distort and hide historical facts and interpret history from their class perspective. They thus satisfy their class interests against the interest of working people.

Kenya won independence after a bloody confrontation with Britain after the sacrifices of lives, limbs, land and property of hundreds of thousands – not to mention collective punishments, unpaid, slave labour and concentration camps for millions. The sacrifices affected not only the generation involved in the war, but future generations as well. Those who fought in various ways for independence saw a minority elite, groomed under the watchful eye of imperialism, take all the power and benefits of independence.

Among the losses that working people suffered was the control over their history. Their oral histories were allowed to die with the death of those involved – directly or indirectly – in the War of Independence. Imperialism took charge of interpreting the anti colonial, anti imperialist war from their perspective, turning our heroes into villains and our enemies into heroes. Their version of history hid the achievements of people who refused to live on their knees and heaped praise on the Homeguards, the protectors of imperialist interest.

Few school textbooks depicting the reality of the war of independence exist after more than 50 years of independence; schools do not teach working class history of Kenya and radical trade unions do not feature in any curriculum – or in national consciousness. Bookshops and public libraries have poor collections on Kenyan history and even these do not show the anti-imperialist and class perspectives of the war of independence. Attempts by progressive historians and writers to address this imbalance by documenting people’s perspective of Kenya’s history have been ruthlessly stopped by the ruling elites directly or by intimidation. Kenya has seen over 50 years of lies, distortions, manipulation of history and hiding the loot of national wealth by the elite and their imperialist masters. And, at the same time, over 50 years of resistance to the lies, distortions, manipulation of history and hiding the loot of national wealth by working people is also hidden by the elite.

It is in this context that Vita Books has published a number of books on the progressive history of the working class and its class allies. These include titles such as *Never be Silent*, *Makhan Singh* and *Liberating Minds* (see further details of these books on the last pages of this Handbook or at <http://vitabooks.co.uk>). While the earlier books were published in London out of necessity, the situation changed with the location of the publisher to Kenya in 2016-17. The latest book – *Kenya's War of Independence* - was launched in February 2018 in Nairobi. Yet another important step by Vita Books is in addressing not only the content of its books, but to meet the needs of working people in terms of the *form* of such publications. It was felt that working people may not have time or resources to read large titles such as *Kenya's War of Independence* with its 448 pages covering over 40 years of Kenya's history.

Vita Books is therefore pleased to announce the launch of this new Series of handbooks under the title *Kenya Resistance Readings*. The new Series covers different aspects of the resistance by people of Kenya to colonialism and imperialism. The Readings are reproduced from published books, unpublished reports, research and oral or visual testimonies. Each title carries references on its particular topic to encourage readers to read and study further on these topics.

The Series aims to provide an insight into the history of resistance by people of Kenya. The Series focuses on specific aspects of resistance before and after independence, specifically Mau Mau, trade unions and peasants and nationalities. Wherever appropriate and possible, Vita Books will translate the Series into Kiswahili or relevant nationality languages so as to reach the intended audiences. In this way the Series will make historical material accessible to its intended readers.

The first titles in the Series have been taken from Shiraz Durrani's book, *Kenya's War of Independence, Mau Mau and its Legacy of Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism, 1948-1990* (2018, Nairobi: Vita Books). Some relevant material from earlier publications is also added when appropriate. The first 3 titles to be published in the Series in 2018 are:

1. Mau Mau, the Revolutionary, Anti-Imperialist Force from Kenya 1948-63
2. Trade Unions and Kenya's War of Independence. Also includes Reflections on the Revolutionary Legacy of Makhan Singh. Reproduced from: Durrani, Shiraz (Ed.) 2015: Makhan Singh: a Revolutionary Kenyan Trade Unionist. Nairobi: Vita Books.

3. People's Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism in Kenya (includes Somali, Kamba, Maasai and South Asian Kenyans, women, peasants, workers and students). It also includes presentations from the event to commemorate the revolutionary work of Shujaa Karimi Nduthu held on March 24, 2018 in Nairobi at the Professional Centre.

The choice of these three topics for the new Series is not accidental. The three aspects – Mau Mau, Trade Unions and Nationalities – make up the three pillars of resistance against the British forces. Durrani (2018) explains the significance of the three:

Thus in essence, the War of Independence was a movement built on three pillars of resistance to colonialism and imperialism. These can be seen as Mau Mau (which included the armed and people's forces with participants from the other two pillars), the trade union movement (including all organised workers in towns and rural areas) and the people's forces consisting of peasants, national and nationality political and social organisations from across the country who supported the War of Independence in different ways, not necessarily always supporting armed resistance. (p.46).

It is necessary to see the unity of the above three forces in order to understand the process of resistance that finally forced colonialism from Kenya. A similar unity will be necessary in the struggle against imperialism and the comprador regime today.

Finally, a word about the title of the Series *Readings in Resistance*. Resistance, as understood here, is resistance to colonialism, imperialism as well as to the capture of the Kenyan state by comprador forces after independence with the active connivance of imperialism. The working people of Kenya will certainly need to look back at their history in order to liberate themselves from the grip of imperialism. So we echo Bertold Brecht's call, "Reach for the book, it is a weapon"¹ – a weapon to preserve and sustain life, no less.

¹ Available at: https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/26853.Bertolt_Brecht [Accessed: 16-10-17].

Preface to Kenya Resists No. 3

People's Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism in Kenya

This is the third publication in the Series *Kenya Resistance Readings*, under the title “People’s Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism in Kenya”. It looks at the third pillar of resistance to British colonialism in Kenya –the others being Mau Mau and radical trade union movement. It brings together several aspects of people’s resistance to colonialism, including resistance by nationalities, women, students, peasants and workers in what can only be described as people’s resistance. While Mau Mau and trade unions were essential in the liberation struggle, on their own they would have faced innumerable difficulties to achieve their goal. Peasants, nationalities, women, children and young people, students, independent churches, independent schools, all played a part in reinforcing the organized and ideology-led resistance of Mau Mau and trade unions. Durrani (2018) highlights the significance of this third pillar of resistance:

Missing from many history books is the revolutionary role played by Kenya’s peasants and pastoralists as partners with workers in the struggle for independence and later, in the post-independence period, as forces resisting neo-colonialism for land and against exploitation of their labour and produce. The period of the first invasion of Kenya by colonial plunderers saw massive peasant resistance and this militancy continued right up to, and beyond, independence. Colonialism found it necessary to hide the peasant militancy as aspects of tribalism and primitiveness. Yet it remains true that workers, on their own, could not have driven colonialism out of Kenya. The support of peasants provided a solid foundation for a united worker-peasant front against a powerful enemy. (p.46).

Thus this third number in this Series seeks to address this gap in many history books. However, unlike the other two publications in the Series, this one takes a brief look at resistance to repression, exploitation and oppression after independence. This is a clear indication that the goals for the War of Independence were not met at independence. Independence was achieved, it is true, yet independence was meant to be a tool, not an end in itself. It was a tool to achieve the real aims of those struggling for liberation – land and freedom. Pio Gama Pinto (1963) best sums up the expected results of the war

of independence:

The sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of Kenya's freedom fighters must be honoured by the effective implementation of the policy - a democratic, African, socialist state in which the people have the right to be free from economic exploitation and the right to social equality. Kenya's *uhuru* must not be transformed into freedom to exploit, or freedom to be hungry and live in ignorance. *Uhuru* must be *uhuru* for the masses - *uhuru* from exploitation, from ignorance, disease and poverty.

Dedan Kimathi (1953) mentioned the class character of Mau Mau and indicated how the aims of the struggle could be achieved when he said:

The poor are the Mau Mau. Poverty can be stopped but not by bombs and weapons from the imperialists. Only the revolutionary justice of the struggles of the poor could end poverty for Kenyans"

That in essence has been the aim of the liberation struggle in Kenya – to get revolutionary justice for the poor and to end poverty for Kenyans. Until that is achieved, the struggle will continue.

Given the importance of studying resistance in Kenya, some additional material is included in this volume in Part 3. These provide thoughts for study and reflection, not only to understand the past and the present, but also to seek an equal and just way for the future.

The first two articles are from 1990s but are still relevant in the context of the current situation in Kenya and globally. The first one deals with the question of nationalities while the second looks at the contradiction between capitalism and socialism with the collapse of USSR. Both these reflect the fact that the struggle in Kenya influences, and is in turn, influenced by developments around the world. The final article reproduces a presentation at the launch of *Kenya's War of Independence* in Nairobi on February 21, 2018. It is hoped that together, these 3 articles provide additional reflections on the theme of resistance.

Shiraz Durrani
London
12-03-2018.

PART 1: PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The Somali Nationality

The Somali nationality are one of the minority nationalities ignored in Kenyan history and their contribution to the War of Independence has not been fully explored. It is for this reason that this section provides a little background on these aspects, although they fall outside the scope of the period this book deals with. Nevertheless, their contribution in earlier years definitely strengthened Kenyan people's resistance to colonialism and so contributed in no small measure to the achievement of independence. The policies of all Kenya Governments since independence have termed the Somali nationality in Kenya as "enemies of the people" and made it very difficult, if not impossible, to research or write an objective history.

Umoja (1987c) provides some details:

From the first day the British set foot on Northern Kenya in the 1890s until their departure in 1963, they encountered unprecedented opposition with heavy losses on the part of the [British] enemy. Casualties could only be sustained by the continuous supply of recruits from other countries such as India, Sudan, Uganda, Nyasaland and Aden.

Such intense activities in Northern Kenya must surely have weakened British forces so that other nationalities could have taken advantage and launched stronger attacks. This is confirmed by Umoja (1987c) in connection with Mohamed Abdille Hassan:

Mohamed Abdille Hassan waged what is undoubtedly one of the biggest challenges to colonial rule in Africa. He visited Nairobi in 1890, then a growing colonial outpost. He was shocked by the presence of white colonial officials there. He quickly returned to the interior to mobilise the people against the colonialists and “stop them doing what they had done to Nairobi”. Mohamed Abdille Hassan founded a politico-military front known as the Darwish against the British, the Italian and feudal Abyssinia... The British and Italian suffered defeats at the hands of the gallant Darwish fighters. In the battle of Dulmadobe in 1914, they trounced the Camel Constabulary and killed its commanding officer... The British beat a hasty retreat and moved their families and personnel across the sea to Aden.... Winston Churchill, then an officer in the colonial office... recommended an evacuation in the face of Mohamed Abdille Hassan’s attacks.

Umoja (1987c) takes up the story that then links with Mau Mau and the War of Independence:

... Political activity, however, continued underground. In 1957, a secret movement known as Horseed (the Vanguard) came to light. Like KLFA [Kenya Land and Freedom Army, Mau Mau], Horseed instituted oath taking in Garissa and Isiolo. The development directly connected the NFD [North Frontier District of Kenya] resistance to that of Mau Mau which was known to have used oathing as part of its organisational authority in the war of independence.

There cannot be a clearer reading of history than this to see the War of Independence in Kenya as a national movement with linked organisations growing up in different parts, all having the same aims and all contributing to the eventual achievement of independence.

The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya (2013) recalls some aspects of activism among the Somali people and their organisations, beginning with the early period of British colonialism:

From 1893 to about 1918, various Somali groups engaged in primary resistance to the colonial powers. Resistance at this stage lacked an explicitly positive political objective and instead centred on resistance to the British invasion of previously independent territories.

It then goes on to examine Somali activism at a later period:

The third phase of pre-independence political activity in Northern Kenya has more direct connections to the Shifta War. In May 1943, the innocuously named Somali Youth Club was founded in Mogadishu. Four years later, branches were opened in Wajir, Mandera and Isiolo. The club changed its name to the Somali Youth League (SYL). Membership was primarily Somali and more specifically, Herti. Large numbers of non-Somali Northerners, such as the Burji and the Borana, were also drawn to the SYL by a seductive and progressive manifesto that included promises to fight for better educational and health facilities. The paucity of schools and hospitals in the region was as much a concern in the 1940s as it is today; the roots of social and economic marginalisation ran very deep. There was a political edge to some of the League's other objectives. For instance, SYL leaders sought to "foster Islam". Although no further information was available as to what would be done to foster Islam, colonial officials came to view with a great deal of suspicion any efforts to increase the profile of Islam in the colonies.

The colonial authorities deemed the Somali Youth League dangerous to its rule and declared it illegal "and its leaders were deported to Lokitaung in the Turkana District" (Singh, 1969). And the reasons are clear when one considers the political campaigns of the SYL. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya (2013) says, "by the late 1950s, The Somali Youth League was most certainly in decline' adding some details:

The SYL branches in Kenya busied themselves with more local campaigns. While presenting itself as a social, charitable and quasi-religious organisation, the League's activities from 1948 onwards were

more overtly political. SYL leaders began to advocate non-compliance with colonial policies, regulations and laws. They urged followers not to take orders from government-appointed headmen. All matters relating to Somali affairs (marriage, disputes, debt, etc.) would instead be handled by SYL-approved appointees.

Umoja (1987c) provides a deeper understanding of the Somali Youth League's activities:

By the end of 1947, the Garissa Somali Youth League was urging the people to prepare to take over the running of their country. During the first half of 1948, the activities of the SYL brought the whole region to a standstill. The party opposed colonial grazing control schemes and encouraged disregard of nationality boundaries. They also undermined the system of ethnic control through government appointed headmen and totally destroyed the confidence of the provincial administration. The people refused to pay taxes and the SYL set up courts and institutions which directly challenged the colonial system.

Similarities between the actions of the SYL and Mau Mau are clear here. But it went further as the progression to armed struggle also matched. Umoja (1987c) continues:

More alarming for the colonialists was the training of youths in the use of firearms. Former members of the Kenya Police Force and the King's African Rifles were involved in drilling [the YSL army]. It is important to note this was the period when the Kenya Land and Freedom Army [Mau Mau] emerged in Central Kenya. The SYL recruited from the police, the army and civil service and was instrumental in the police strike of 1947. Kenyan workers were vigorously organising to confront economic exploitation, political subordination and racial discrimination. In Mombasa, the workers staged the general strike in 1947.

The political organisation of the people tightened, the colonial

government intervened by proscribing the SYL at the end of 1948. The state of emergency which was temporarily relaxed after war was renewed. The NDF [Northern Frontier District] was sealed off. This included the removal of all other Kenyans and people from Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia from the region.

The SYL can legitimately be seen as a sister organisation of Mau Mau and the struggle of the Somali and other nationalities in the region needs to be seen as part of the Kenyan people's War of Independence. Umoja (1987c) sums up people's struggle:

The protracted resistance of Somali, Boran, Orma, Rendille and the Turkana nationalities symbolises our people's heroic struggle against colonialism. Foreign intruders describe the Somali as resisters par excellence, and indeed the NFD is full of examples of the gallant stand of our people and the failure of the imperialists to consolidate their influence in the region.

It is this militancy that also explains why USA imperialism found it necessary to reduce Somalia to a state of chaos, pitting one group against another and creating poverty in a region that has survived for centuries in harsh conditions. It also explains the current Kenyan government's actions in Somalia in answer to a "call to duty" from USA and Britain in return for their support. The Kenyan regime is also worried about its own staying power in the face of the militant Somali people's resistance to imperialism and its allies.

This section highlights the need for more research on the resistance activities among all regions of Kenya and among all nationalities. Just because colonial, imperialist and the comprador governments have refused to explore such resistance does not mean that the resistance did not exist. Progressive historians and activists need to investigate such resistance and also to find linkages of these resistance activities with the Mau Mau resistance. Given the resistance history of people of all nationalities, it is not surprising that people of different nationalities were active in militant trade union activities and in Mau Mau.

The Kamba Nationality

The involvement of the Kamba nationality in Mau Mau secures their place in the War of Independence. Their involvement was not only in terms of their nationality issues, but in their part of the Mau Mau movement. This makes it impossible for anyone to claim that only the Kikuyu nationality were involved in the War of Independence or in Mau Mau. The following section from Edgerton (1990) provides evidence of Kamba involvement in Mau Mau:

During the first half of 1954, while large Mau Mau units battled security forces around the forest's edges, the government was alarmed by evidence that Mau Mau was spreading, especially to the 600,000 Kamba whose lands stretched south and east from the Kikuyu reserve. In May, Kenya's new police commissioner warned that the Kamba were drifting toward active Mau Mau involvement, and in June the Blundell-led War Council's greatest fear was the threatened spread of Mau Mau. After Operation Anvil cleared Nairobi of most Kikuyu residents, more than 20,000 Kamba moved to the city, becoming its majority African population. Many of these Kamba took Mau Mau oaths.

In the past the Kamba had been enemies of the Kikuyu, but by 1952 they had come to share Kikuyu grievances against poverty, land shortage, population growth, and white racism. Several hundred young Kamba formed themselves into Mau Mau units, killing pro-government chiefs and headmen in the Kamba reserves, while others joined combat units in the Mt. Kenya forests. Still, the great majority of the Kamba population watched and waited to see how the rebellion would succeed. When government security forces had little visible success in defeating Mau Mau during 1953, the Kamba became more restless, and, by 1954, many thousands had taken the Mau Mau oath, and thousands more were openly on the verge of committing themselves to armed rebellion.

The prospect of the Kamba was particularly frightening to the government because Kamba soldiers and policemen formed the backbone of both the K.A.R. and the Kenya Police. If these men with their military training and their weapons had joined the rebels, the result for white Kenya could have been disastrous. Many of these armed Kamba discussed joining Mau Mau, and some considered turning their

weapons against their white officers; but concerned Kamba loyalists alerted the government and Baring wisely chose to respond not with threats but with benefits.

As the conflict developed, Mau Mau leaders quickly moved to recruit Kamba members. This recruitment was achieved through the Mau Mau oath. KAU Nairobi branch which had been run by Mau Mau militants since 1952 (Rosberg & Nottingham, Myth 1966), though dominated by Kikuyu, included members drawn from other ethnic groups. Paul Ngei, Assistant secretary of KAU, was Kamba and a member of the committee. Ngei invited “politically-minded” Kamba to Kiburi House to take the oath. ... Thousands of Kamba took the oath.

Corfield (1960) details that when, in March 1954 security forces arrested a significant fighting force of Kamba Mau Mau, ten of the seventeen arrested were railway workers. Later that year, the government identified 253 known Kamba members of Mau Mau who were employed as railway workers. -

As 1953 drew to a close, officials were concerned about the increasing penetration of Mau Mau among the Kamba. “The cancer is spreading”, noted one. Officials estimated that the “vast majority” of Kamba in Nairobi had taken the oath. Kamba now began to take a greater part in the physical struggle. Security forces also found members of a Kamba oathing team in Arusha in northern Tanganyika, and discovered at least one Kamba Mau Mau “general” at the head of a battalion of over 1,000 Mau Mau in the Abedares of Central Province. (Quoting: TNA. PRO CO 822/780, “Infiltration of Mau Mau into Tribes other than the Gikuyu (Secret)”. One Mau Mau major from Meru recalled that a Kamba general named Kavyu (“knife”) was in charge of his fighting unit, which operated in the forests around Mount Kenya. “In every fighting group of about thirty, there might be five or six Kambas,” he noted (Quoting: Interview no. 77, Kirimara, 11 May 2009).

Kamba Mau Mau

- Kenya African Union Nairobi branch run by Mau Mau militants since 1952 included members from many ethnic groups. Paul Ngei, Assistant Secretary, a Kamba, invited “politically-minded” Kamba to take the oath. Thousands took it.
- 1953: Officials concerned at penetration of Mau Mau among the Kamba. “The cancer is spreading”, noted one. Officials estimated that the “vast majority” of Kamba in Nairobi had taken the oath. Security forces found members of a Kamba oathing team in Arusha in Tanganyika and discovered a Kamba Mau Mau “general” heading a battalion of 1,000 in the Abedares.
- 1954: Security forces arrested a fighting force of Kamba Mau Mau. The government identified 253 Kamba members of Mau Mau, all railway workers.
- A Mau Mau major from Meru recalled that a Kamba general named Kavyu (“knife”) was in charge of his fighting unit in the forests around Mount Kenya. “In every fighting group of about thirty, there might be five or six Kambas”.

The Kenya Committee for Democratic Rights (1952-60) provides additional references:

- 44 Wakamba were arrested in Tanganyika and returned to Kenya during a police roundup. (17-6-55)

The Maasai Nationality²

- Mzee Paita was the leader of Mau Mau fighters in Kajiado in the 1950s. He was imprisoned alongside other big names during the struggle.
- Shomo News estimates that there are 50 Mau Mau veterans in Kajiado. Majority of them are Maasai. The group led by Mzee Paita and Aden Hassan Elmi narrate how they were evicted from their hideouts at Oldoinyo Orok in Namanga which was the base for Mau Mau along the Kenya-Tanzania border and a link to freedom fighters in Tanzania.
- Oldoinyo Orok hosted more than 2,000 Mau Mau freedom fighters by 1954 before the British overran them, detaining the fighters and taking thousands of livestock from communities that supported them. Most of the freedom fighters were held at Isinya detention camp.

Ole Kisio

Gen. ole Kisio (1)

- The Maasai played a vital role in the struggle. Young warriors sacrificed their lives for the country under the leadership of one of the most revered Mau Mau generals, the late Kurito ole Kisio. A defiant Kisio marshalled the Narok war front that heavily destabilised the colonialists, prompting them to put a heavy bounty on his head.
- His valour would later see his then pregnant wife, Miriam Enekurito, become the first person to be arrested for collusion with the Mau Mau. She was tortured until Kisio was killed in 1954.
- “They took oath and never looked back. They started raiding settler homes and detention camps across Narok in search of firearms,” says Sironka ole Ketikai, who played the role of ‘piki piki’ (gun runner) for the Mau Mau in the 1950s. Then aged 19, he would ferry stolen guns, drugs, and military uniform and supplied those in

² pp.196-198 of Kenya's War of Independence

Nyandarua with livestock for food. Under Kisio's leadership, and with Nkere, Nkapiian and Nahangi as generals, the battalion caused the imperialists sleepless nights.

Gen. ole Kisio (2)

- Karari Njama says the Maasais were crucial in the resistance against the British. "Kisio led an army of more than 800 fighters in Nairegi Enkare. They would move all the way to Suswa and destabilised the Britons," he states. The warrior is said to have employed guerrilla tactics in raiding British facilities where they would release prisoners.
- It was during one such raid in Olololunga that Ketikai's uncle was captured by the 'lolonkana' (Homeguards).

Mau Mau influence spreads

- In Nairobi, the situation was grave and acute. Mau Mau orders were carried out in the heart of the city, Mau Mau courts sit in judgement and their sentences were carried out. The revenues collected by Mau Mau were used for bribery and Mau Mau supplies.
- 44 Wakamba were arrested in Tanganyika & returned to Kenya.
- There were Mau Mau cells in Mombasa, Pemba, Zanzibar, and other coastal regions. In Tanzania, Mau Mau succeeded in winning over hundreds of Kenyan migrant workers. The colonial authorities in both countries banned the Mau Mau.
- The Ethiopian intelligence was aware of what was going on in Kenya. Mau Mau and its causes was a subject about which they frequently asked questions... there seemed a parallel with their own mountain rebels, the Shiftas.
- "In S. Africa it is considered there is an underground movement by the natives to overthrow established Government throughout Africa and this is certainly the idea of Mau Mau".
- Sources can be found in Durrani, S (2006).

South Asian Kenyans

One of the methods used by colonialism and imperialism to control people and countries include falsifying their history and creating divisions among people on the bases of class, race, religion, gender or other social manifestations that could be used so that they get busy fighting these imperialist-lit small fires while forgetting the big blaze of imperialist looting and devastation which are in the very nature of capitalism. South Asian Kenyans also suffered from the divisive policies of colonialism, which created artificial divisions and distance between South Asian and African people. They were used as scapegoats for the poverty and inequality caused by capitalist exploitation.

In addition, just as the history of the Kenyan national liberation struggle and of Mau Mau was destroyed or secreted away in hidden hauls in England, the entire progressive contribution of South Asian communities to the liberation of Kenya has been hidden, marginalised or misinterpreted. This was done throughout the period of colonial and imperialist presence in Kenya, but particularly during the Mau Mau period. While many South Asian communities are aware of their contributions and regularly communicate these in publications such as the *Awaaz Magazine*³ and on-line networks (such as Africana-Orientalia and EACircle groups), their deliberations remained outside the mainstream Kenyan or British lives. Some recent publications⁴ have begun to re-examine the history of the contribution made by the South Asian communities in the liberation struggle in Kenya.

There are a number of strands to the struggles of the South Asian communities as a minority nationality in Kenya as well as part of the wider Kenyan anti-colonial, anti-imperialist struggles. One strand dates to the early part of the 19th Century, indicating that their involvement in Mau Mau was not an isolated event but followed a long period of anti-colonial, anti-imperialist activism. Such action included the activism in the trade union movements, recorded by Makhan Singh (1969 and 1980). Their contribution included involvement in the Ghadar movement for which some activists were sentenced to death and deported by the British colonials. Some aspects of their contribution in

3 Available in print and on-line: <http://www.awaazmagazine.com> [Accessed: 20-11-16].

4 See for example Patel, Zarina (1997 and 2006), Aiyar, Sana (2015), Durrani, Shiraz (2015) and Durrani, Nazmi (2017).

the publishing field, which was closely linked with their political activism is covered in a number of publications, including Durrani, Shiraz (2006).

Yet another strand was the activism and involvement of many South Asian Kenyans in India's struggle for independence which then influenced their activities in Kenya. Thus Makhan Singh was active in India where he was jailed by the British administration, Pio Gama Pinto was active in the Goan people's struggle against Portuguese colonialism, and many others were influenced by the sub-continent's liberation struggle. Some cases are mentioned in Durrani, Nazmi, Naila Durrani and Eddie Pereira (2017): *Liberating Minds, Restoring Kenyan History: Anti-imperialist Resistance by Progressive South Asian Kenyans, 1884-1965*. Nairobi: Vita Books. links the struggle for independence in India with that in Kenya:

In the mid 1940s, the struggle for independence in India fanned the flames of nationalism in Africa. In Kenya, patriotic fervour brought an end to the Colonial governance duplicating the historic events on the Indian sub-continent thus taking a lead in Africa's struggle for independence. Most observers agree that South Asians of Kenya were catalysts in the rise of national self-determination in Africa.

The independence of India in 1947 provided an important boost for the Kenyan national struggle and for Mau Mau. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, "saw India's role as promoting freedom for all people, especially in Africa. Nehru positioned his new state to facilitate the emergence of 'one world where freedom is universal and there is equality of opportunity between races and peoples'" (Aiyar, 2015). This principled stand provided ideological strength to those Indians in Kenya who were involved in Kenya's War of Independence and also to Mau Mau. Nehru summed up his approach in 1953 when he announced that the "Indian sympathies were entirely with Africans 'in their struggle against exploitation, repression and colonialism'" (Aiyar, 2015). Apa Pant's position is summed up by Aiyar (2015) thus: "Pant had concluded that Mau Mau violence was a self-defensive reaction to the violence of the Settlers and colonial government"

In August 1948 Pant came to Kenya as the first Indian high commissioner. His work in supporting the cause of Kenya's independence is outside the scope of

this book. But a mention can be made of his work with Pinto and other South Asians in Kenya and the fact that he was made a Kikuyu elder “at a secret ceremony attended by twelve elders, with Chief Koinange presiding” (Aiyar, 2015). This support extended to education, publishing and training.

Kinyatti (2008) quotes James Beuttah from a 1979 interview:

James Beuttah tells us that Pant used his diplomatic privilege “to champion our anti-colonial struggle”. For the six years that he served in Kenya, he conscientiously raised funds for our struggle. He was particularly successful in soliciting funds for the Kenya Teachers’ College from the Indian community and also obtained scholarships for Kenyan students to study in India. He also gave political advice to the movement and publicly supported Kenya’s anti-imperialist leadership.’

Kinyatti (2008) continues the narrative:

When the armed struggle started, according to Beuttah, his [Pant’s] office became a political base where messages and documents were received and transmitted and his house a center of political meetings and a place where Kenyans and Indian supporters could secretly meet.

Such support for the liberation struggle was extremely important as no other major country had supported the Kenyan people’s struggle for liberation.

It was India’s support that Pio Gama Pinto used to aid the struggle, including raising funds for setting up of the Lumumba Institute which was later destroyed by Jomo Kenyatta.

One area that has not been adequately explored is the role of South Asians’ support for Mau Mau. But just as Kenyan history as a whole and in particular the history of Mau Mau has been seen as isolated incidents, unrelated to and uninfluenced by each other, so has the history of South Asian revolutionary movement in Kenya been seen as a series of isolated individuals and events that happen as individual spark points, not related to any bigger picture. It is the bigger picture that is missing from the current history of South Asian presence in Kenya. But while the recent release of colonial papers in Britain has enabled a fresh approach to understanding the history of Mau Mau and

Kenya, the history of South Asians in Kenya has not experienced a similar renaissance. But there is evidence, for example in the work of Aiyar (2015), that there is material in the colonial files that can help to create a correct and a more complete picture. It remains for committed historians and researchers to travel the long path of painstaking toil in these papers to create the bigger picture.

As little attention has been paid to the militant South Asian history in Kenya, the following section recalls these strands of the South Asian struggles in Kenya. While the isolated facts have been accepted, the overall picture created by these facts has not been fully seen or appreciated. A process of joining the dots to make the picture clear is perhaps what is needed now. The start of the process of South Asians' arrival in Kenya and its impact on Kenya is explained by Durrani, Naila (2017):

They came without a penny but with a political understanding and experience more potent than gold. They brought with them a wealth of experience of militant class struggles. They came armed with the knowledge of the weapons of organisation and of the power of newspapers, handbills, newsletters, pamphlets and such other means of raising worker consciousness and of forging unity along class lines.

From this early start, the involvement of South Asians in the national liberation movement was but a short step. It is in this field that Aiyar (2015) throws light on this rarely discussed or researched topic and her work provides some interesting facts mentioned below. This is supplemented by material from Durrani, Nazmi (2017). Together, they provide an altogether different picture from the “norm” of the South Asian involvement in the liberation struggle. It is not that information on this is not available. Aiyar (2015) quotes from Kenya Government Intelligence Reports which were specifically on South Asians. Such reports, as well as oral testimonies from those active at the time (again, as used by Aiyar) remain an under-used resource. Aiyar (2015) quotes below from the Kenya Government Intelligence Reports:

By February 1953, [Kenya Colonial Government Intelligence] reports from Nyanza pointed to more specific and direct involvement [in Mau Mau]. A “Punjabi auctioneer” from Kisumu, where about 5,000 Indians

lived, “expressed sympathy and support... for Kikuyu terrorism” and had joined “a number of Indians from Nairobi” to tour the colony with the aim of encouraging other Indians to support the Mau Mau. An Indian in Kisii, another town in Nyanza with an Indian population of less than 350, was publicly “advocating Kikuyu terrorist methods” as the only hope for “African freedom”. Intelligence officers identified six Indian railway employees who were supporting Mau Mau activities “as the best way to prevent European ‘domination.’ ” In Nyeri, the Kikuyu reserve in Kiambu where 604 Indians lived, the Patel Brotherhood, an association of Gujarati Hindus, was found to be “actively” assisting the Mau Mau. Intelligence summaries reported that even in Mombasa, which was far from the epicentre of the rebellion, Hindus had announced their support for “the Kikuyu cause and its efforts to secure its rights”... Although no Indian ever became a Mau Mau guerrilla forest fighter, others helped rebels in direct ways.

At another level, Aiyar (2015) finds a well-organised network of South Asian activists:

With the arrest of almost 200 KAU members, activists in Nairobi organised themselves into a number of different groups. This group included [Pio Gama] Pinto, who was the liaison between the rebels, detainees, Indian lawyers, and [Apa] Pant. Pinto not only organised political defences for the detainees but also supplied arms and money to fighters in the forest from supply lines in Nairobi. This led to his arrest on June 19, 1954. He was detained without trial in Takwa camp, Manda Island, until July 1959, when his restriction orders were revoked. Pinto was joined by at least five other Indians in this camp, which was set up especially for non-Kikuyu considered “hardcore” - a term used by the security forces for Mau Mau detainees they were unable to “break” (i.e. force to confess to taking Mau Mau oaths) in the pipeline system. These included Jaswant Singh, Jaswant Singh Bharaj, Babubhai Patel, and Bakshish Singh. In addition, Makhan Singh, who had been arrested two years before the emergency, was kept detained for its entire duration.

The fact that the contribution of South Asians to the War of Independence in

general, and to Mau Mau in particular, has been sidelined is due to yet another factor, not just the deliberate actions of the colonial divide and rule tactics and policy of “stealing people’s history”. Aiyar (2015) interprets this in the following way:

In the early 1970s, Mau Mau memories published by forest fighters and their supporters in postcolonial Kenya usurped the narrative of the rebellion that the state refused to acknowledge. Pio Gama Pinto found a place in this history, but he was presented as an exceptional individual who was against the grain of mainstream Indian politics. Both Kaggia and Odinga claimed that he was “regarded by many Africans not as an Asian but as a real African.” Insisting that Pio did not represent Indian politics in any way, Kaggia was emphatic that Pinto was the only Indian detained during the emergency.

Aiyar (2015) is correct that the perspective promoted through such memorials by Mau Mau fighters did influence the history of the liberation struggle in Kenya and of Mau Mau. At the same time, it is necessary to look deeper into the reasons why such “narratives were usurped”. It would not be surprising if the colonial policy of creating and nurturing strife along racial and “tribal” lines found fertile ground among some activists themselves. This affected the narrative, not only of South Asians, but nationalities other than Kikuyu as the colonialist propaganda promoted the myth that the liberation struggle was a “kikuyu affair”. Thus, in common with South Asians, other nationalities such as the Maasai, Kamba, Luo, Somali as well as coastal and other people are also seen as not having played a part in Mau Mau.

But there are likely to be other reasons why the history of Mau Mau ignores and marginalised the participation of South Asians. One such reason may relate to the need for secrecy which Mau Mau as an organisation established in order to struggle against a superior enemy. Thus Mau Mau organisation was along the lines of “kundi” - cell structures - so as to ensure that only a small group of people knew other members and few knew who the leaders were. This is a common practice in other guerrilla movements. While such a structure no doubt protected the organisation against the enemy, it resulted in many combatants and activists not knowing who other combatants and activists were. This was particularly true where activists had taken oaths to

preserve organisational secrecy. Perhaps this may explain the perspective of Odinga and Kaggia as expressed by Aiyar (2015).

Another point to note is that those who took the Mau Mau oaths were sworn to secrecy till death and many combatants to this day are reluctant to talk about their experiences fully, particularly when it comes to naming others who fought with them. The political atmosphere in Kenya after independence has again not been conducive to talking openly about Mau Mau and naming others may condemn them in the eyes of Kenya governments who have been hostile to Mau Mau and its egalitarian goals.

At the same time, many South Asian activists belonged to political organisations - in India or other parts of the world - which had strong codes of discipline and secrecy. These included the Ghadhar movement, the Indian Communist Party as well as the movements for liberation in India and Goa. Such activists then maintained their silence about their political work as part of their organisational commitment and discipline. In addition, people like Makhan Singh belonged to the Sikh community which again emphasised service to others without seeking self glory. It may be for these reasons that Makhan Singh's two books on history of trade union movement in Kenya (Singh, Makhan, 1969,1980) hardly mention his own role in trade union and political struggles.

All the above may explain the lack of South Asian presence in the history of Mau Mau. In addition, there is some oral evidence requiring further research that a number of South Asians were members of Mau Mau. A Mau Mau veteran in his 80s gave this information to the author and two others in an interview in Nairobi. The veteran clarified that his and his group's Mau Mau oath still had validity and that any information about their activities could be revealed to the public only if the group agreed. The interview took place in a Nairobi hotel on August 5, 2013 and was video recorded. Some points from it are mentioned below. The veteran remains nameless and will be referred to here as Mzee WM⁵.

5 Sad news update on Mzee WM: “ ... Lakini Mzee [WM] ametuwacha [*But Mzee has left us*]. He fell down where he was staying and after that he was unable to walk. Akapelekwa hos.[*He was taken to Hospital*]. Familia wakamtoa [*His family had to have him released from hospital*] before he was well due to finances. He died on Friday at his place”. [Message to the author from GM, Nairobi, 05-09-17, 6:41 pm].

He first gives some facts about his life as it throws light on the lives of Mau Mau activists:

- Born in 1931.
- We were poor. Father was a member of KCA [Kikuyu Central Association]. Food, school fees difficult; sold animals to survive; with daily fear. Father's land taken by government, but still have no shamba.
- Mau Mau [MM] Kiapo [Oath]: Very serious matter. Love of land, *binadamu* (humanity); this is *our* land. Oath is forever, for life, even today.
- Pio Gama Pinto and I were in one *kundi* (Mau Mau cell). Issac GW gave me the Mau Mau oath in 1946. My sister and mother knew Pinto. Pinto's work was to *kuungana makabila* [bring together different nationalities], establish links with like-minded people who shared goals.
- Question: Why silent all these years? Reply: Talk to who? Can't see the President. There have been three governments from the time of independence; *nifanye nini* [*What can I do?*]? Tell me, who do I see?
- General Ndungu died recently; compensation in London to only 5,000. What about the rest? and those who died? 7 years in the forest, I am angry day and night, 20,000 Mau Mau still alive in Taita, Ukambani, Nairobi. Francis Muthee fled from Manyani [Detention Centre] to the forest, he is selling onions now. Active in World War II, no *shambas* [farms], we got nothing.
- Makhan Singh took the highest Mau Mau oath, the seventh oath and the highest one, and top secret: preparing for future wars, for neo-colonial stage; after colonialism, another enemy may come. Oath not to return from battle, die but to not surrender. Oath taken at Shauri Moyo.
- Makhan Singh was a long time member with _____ who brought Makhan Singh [MS] to the movement. MS took 2nd & 3rd oaths in Pumwani, behind social hall, at Mama W's. He was a member before

going to India.

- Inspector Bian Singh, *Mkubwa* [Head] of Prison, was a Mau Mau member and helped the struggle; knew which Mau Mau members were in danger and allowed them to escape.
- Makhan Singh had lots of contacts, brought other Asians, had an Asian *kundi* [political cell], brought money and medicine.
- Ambu Patel worked with MS.
- MS worked with a doctor and arranged medical service via “ugali communications”.
- Mau Mau guidance if facing death:
- *Mtu apende nchi yake* [A person should love his/her country]
- *Makabila yote bila bagua* [People of all nationalities, without discrimination].
- Don’t sell your country.
- Don’t sell your rights.

As mentioned earlier, the above information needs to be further investigated together with that from other veterans. Mzee WM is no longer with us and many other veterans are dying with the passage of time. The urgency of this work cannot be over-emphasised.

Besides the above possible reasons relating to lack of information about the participation of South Asians in Mau Mau, Durrani, Shiraz (forthcoming) suggests, in the context of Pio Gama Pinto, another possible reason:

Another significant reason why information about Pinto is not available can perhaps be found in the fact that Pinto belonged to a minority ethnic community - South Asian Kenyans. In a situation where not only the British colonial authorities, but the independent Kenyan government and the elite nurtured by imperialism encouraged divide-and-rule policies against South Asian minority communities, Pinto’s achievements were actively hidden from masses of people on whose behalf he fought. Again, there was not a mass population of progressive South Asian communities which would seek to ensure that one of their

own sons was given due recognition for their contribution to national freedom. In any case, class formation among South Asian Kenyans had progressed further than among other Kenyans and the petty bourgeois Asians certainly did not support Pinto's call for equality nor his active involvement in the national liberation struggle. For example, *Drum* (1965) comments:

Few people except those who, like Pinto, are regarded as misfits or even traitors to their own community, can know just how much courage he needed to act as he did... Spurned and often ostracised by his fellow Goans for throwing his lot in with the Africans, only absolute conviction in the rightness of his cause could have carried Pinto through those difficult years.

Pinto's own temperament, which sought hard work for himself and glory for others, often came to Sbe taken for granted and hid his real achievements from many people. Thus, forces of both race and class conspired to maintain a blanket of silence about Pinto, his politics, his contribution and about his political work.

Durrani S. (forthcoming book on Pinto) mentions the following:

...yet another reason for lack of information on Pinto ... is related to racism and anti-race struggles within the progressive circles. It remains a matter of speculation whether one of the reasons that Pinto remained "a hand behind the curtain" and did not come out centre stage was because of racism within the liberation forces. Similarly, it is not clear whether some aspects of his achievement remain unknown because of efforts by some to sideline him because of his racial background. While not much has been written about this aspect, a glimpse of racism from the African activists towards their Asian and European comrades is provided by Kaggia (2012):

One of the most notable event organised by the Study Circle was the "April 6th as the day for South Africa" in 1952 ... Before the Conference began, it was proposed that the non-Africans must leave. The two non-Africans at the conference, Pio Gama Pinto and Peter Wright, were members of the Study Circle

which convened the conference in the first place... Eventually... the conference [chaired by Jomo Kenyatta, President of KAU] continued without our two friends.

Kaggia does not mention the name of the person who raised the objections, but mentions that he and Joseph Murumbi opposed the proposal, implying that the others supported the proposal. It is also unclear what the position of the Chair on this matter was.

The same forces of race and class apply to Makhan Singh and Ambubhai Patel, among others. Makhan Singh was the driving force behind setting up the radical trade union movement, its activities and ideological direction. In his histories of the trade union movement or in any of his writings, he does not talk about his own role or actions. Even his brief autobiographical piece is written in the third person. This is also the case with Ambubhai Patel who was active in many dangerous activities including collecting photographs of Mau Mau fighters, yet there is almost no reference to his own contribution.

It is therefore not surprising that very little is known about South Asian activities in Mau Mau. But this does not imply that they were absent. Although Patel, Z. (2006) says that Makhan Singh “never took the Mau Mau oath”, she also says that Achieng Oneko in an interview in 2005 “stated categorically that Makhan Singh was Mau Mau”. This would confirm what Mzee WM also said. Edgerton (1990) says “Even during the Emergency some Indians risked their lives to help the rebels, while others like Makhan Singh and Pio de Gama Pinto played important roles in launching the movement”. At the same time, Kinyatti (2008) says:

The progressive, anti-imperialist group in the Indian community, men like Pio Gama Pinto, Jaswant Singh Bharaj and others, played a very important role in supplying KLFA with firearms, intelligence, funds, medicine, and helped the movement to produce revolutionary literature. Jaswant Singh not only supplied the movement with firearms, his house was also a safe haven for the KLFA guerrillas... Ambu Patel also played a significant role in the Mau Mau movement. He collected funds for the movement and made his house in Nairobi a safe haven for the movement. He and Pinto were involved in the production of the Mau Mau organ, *The High Command*.

It is inconceivable that those involved in the production of such a key publication of a movement such as Mau Mau would be given this responsibility unless they were highly trusted members of the organisation. It is thus important to examine a little further into the involvement of the South Asian communities in Mau Mau and in the War of Independence. This is best provided by brief portraits of activists from the minority community. This section looks at only the first category that Seidenberg (1983) mentions, the “radicals”, as the other two categories, the conservatives and the moderates, are not within the scope of this book:

The Asians, in their response to Mau Mau, tended to fit into three categories. There were no Asians who fought in the forest, but one group which might be called the radicals was strongly sympathetic and gave covert aid to the movement. Although some of these radicals had been active before 1952, many of the new activists were second generation Asians who had left their fathers’ businesses and been educated abroad. Whether in India or Britain or even in North America, they were influenced by the libertarian ideals of John Stuart Mill and the socialist precepts of Karl Marx.

Edgerton (1990) mentions three non-Africans as playing an important part in advisory capacity for policy development for Mau Mau. Interestingly, it is not only the presence of South Asians that is missing from the history of Kenya’s War of Independence: Europeans are almost absent, but there have been many progressive Europeans, some as civil servants, whose contribution still needs to be researched and acknowledged:

Curious as it may seem in retrospect, the leaders of Mau Mau allowed three non Africans to serve on the Study Circle. One, Pio de Gama Pinto, was a Goan. Two were Europeans: Peter Wright, a former professor of history at Cawnpore, India, who served as a Lieutenant-Colonel in the British Intelligence Corps during World War II, and John P. B. Miller, a former Royal Navy Lieutenant Commander, then a resident of Kenya. The Study Circle originally met in the Nairobi offices of the Indian National Congress, and later, as police surveillance tightened, in private homes.

The following extracts are from Seidenberg (1983)

Ambu H. Patel: Other individual Asians manifested a radical response to Mau Mau by carrying on underground assistance to the patriots in the forest or to the families of Mau Mau detainees. Ambu H. Patel, a staunch follower of Gandhi who had been imprisoned in India for this anti-colonial stand, was a man with a mission “who made many sacrifices for Kenya” (quoting Hon. Clement Lubembe]. Throughout the Emergency, Patel collected funds for food and clothing for Mau Mau fighters and published leaflets and books concerned with Kenya’s independence struggle. Patel also looked after Kenyatta’s daughter, Margaret, while Kenyatta was in detention, and at great personal risk sent him clothes, food, and shoes when no-one else would or did.

Yacoob-Deen, owner of a sawmill located near Karatina in Mau Mau territory, gave the patriots generous supplies of food, boots, medicines and bandages until he was tipped off that he was going to be arrested and hanged by the British police. He took the first plane “going anywhere” and landed in Karachi where he remained for twelve years. After Kenya independence, he returned on a special pass and became a citizen.

Apa Pant Militant African nationalism was greatly aided not only by individual Asians residing in Kenya but also by Shri Apa Pant, the Indian High Commissioner, and his wife, Nalinidevi. As Prime Minister Nehru’s emissary in East Africa from 1948 to 1954, Pant befriended African leaders and promulgated the African cause among Asians in Kenya. At any opportunity - tea parties, at openings of football matches and schools, and at large, independent gatherings organized at his home - he propounded his views on the freedom of Kenya. His spirited, anti-colonial stand was in fact so appreciated by African leaders that Senior Chief Mbiu Koinange, a prominent Kikuyu headman, adopted him as his eighth son, and gave him land in Kiambu. Pant exhorted the Asians to fight against racialism, sectarianism, and communalism, and to give shelter to Africans during Mau Mau; and encouraged them to take up citizenship in their country of adoption. As a result of his activities, a great deal of pressure was put on the Government by the settlers to oust

Pant and his staff. Consequently, this chief representative was declared *persona non grata* and left Kenya in May 1953.

Patel, Ambu (1963) provides further information on some other activists:

Jaswant Singh Bharaj ... This [bad treatment and insults at the Kenya Police Reserve] made him a sympathiser of the anti-White section among the Mau Mau and he commenced manufacturing and supplying them arms, ammunition and other material. He supplied piping to the Mau Mau Bush Fighters for making guns and taught to a few of them the art of gun-making ... He was arrested in May, 1954, tried and sentenced to be hanged. In the appeal, the sentence was reduced to life imprisonment but he was released in 1958 after serving four and a half years in Takwa Detention Camp, off Mombasa, along with other detainees such as Messrs. John Mbiyu Koinange, Mr. Achieng Oneko and Mr. M. C. Chokwe. He is a sincere and selfless supporter of the African struggle for freedom and intends serving Africa and the African in every way possible. By profession he is a carpenter, mason, plumber, electrician, builder, radio and motor mechanic, welder, lorry driver, tractor driver and gunmaker. Today he is earning his bread in a temporary job labouring as a carpenter in Nairobi.

Durrani, Nazmi (2017) provides some details of activities of Manilal A. Desai, Makhan Singh, Ambubhai Patel, Pio Gama Pinto and Jaswant Singh Bharaj. These few examples point to the need for more research and also better dissemination of these facts so that they are part of people's consciousness about Kenya's history and the active involvement of different nationalities and people in the War of Independence.

Women

In spite of such violence, or perhaps because of it, women played an active role in the War of Independence in many capacities, including active participation in almost all aspects of the armed struggle. They also enabled the struggle to continue over so many years by ensuring support for families where men had been detained or were on active duties in the forests and towns. Again, their military role landed many of them into colonial concentration camps.

It is regrettable that the important role of women in the War of Independence has not been fully understood or fully recorded. Alam (2007) notes this point and adds a possible reason for the lack of coverage of women's involvement in the struggle:

Women's testimonies and autobiographies reveal extensive participation in the Mau Mau insurgency. Interestingly, there are certain silences in the narratives of women's roles in Mau Mau. There are gaps and contradictions not only in official discourse and insurgent accounts but also in male insurgent's accounts as well. Women in colonial Kenya have had a long tradition of resistance against colonialism, which, unfortunately, quite often remains unaccounted and hidden.

Women played critical roles in a number of areas that made Mau Mau sustainable. These include tasks that built and sustained Mau Mau's organisation as well as key duties in the forest as carriers and as activists in other duties needed for survival in the forests. Gachihi (1986) provides a useful record of women's involvement in Mau Mau. She gives an overview of women's contribution:

These women were assigned duties that were decisive in engagements between the Mau Mau fighters and the well-armed British forces, and especially in rallying the support of fellow women. Thus in the Mau Mau there emerged women leaders who organized fellow women to act as contacts with the other fighters. Zealous Mau Mau supporters were also found in the bulk of peasant women who shouldered heavy burdens and executed dangerous tasks in the name of the movement. These are the women who fed and supplied Mau Mau contact groups with weapons and other provisions usually purloined or wrenched from the enemy. Other important tasks that these women carried out for the movement included smuggling such vital provisions as medicine and clothing while acting at the same time as couriers of information through many hazardous routes.

In addition to the specific roles mentioned above, women played their part in the War of Independence in many other ways as part of people's resistance. Thus they joined hands with men, children, older and young people whose

united support for resistance provided the bedrock of resistance that Mau Mau built its strength on. Gachihi (1986) mentions yet another level of support that women and children provided to Mau Mau:

Wives and daughters in Emergency villages became vital providers of food, shelter and information. All these people formed a formidable support group which nurtured the comparatively small number of combatants in the Nyandarua and Mount Kenya forest regions. Indeed, the Colonial Government realized that to crush out Mau Mau meant crushing out this support. The Government, therefore, adopted a broad policy in the Kikuyu reserves “to force, entice, the passive element into a change of heart”. As a tacit conspiracy between the supporters and the fighters had already been firmly established, there was little prospect that the Government would succeed by enticement, and consequently, a lot of force was used. It is this support group behind the Mau Mau which reveals, to a great extent, why such a relatively poorly-equipped group of freedom fighters under such stringent conditions and pressure from the Government were able to sustain the struggle for at least four years.

Bruce-Lockhart (2014) records the establishment of women’s concentration camps by the colonial authorities in specially created concentration camps:

From 1954 to 1960, the British detained approximately 8000 women under the Emergency Powers imposed to combat the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya. Kamiti Detention Camp was the main site of women’s incarceration, and its importance has been widely acknowledged by scholars. However, new documentary evidence released from the Hanslope Park Archive since 2011 has revealed the existence of a second camp established for women at Gitamaiyu, created in 1958 explicitly to deal with the remaining “hardcore” female detainees.

However, it is important to understand the multiple dimension of women’s resistance. There were specific conditions under colonialism that affected lives of women and which made them active in the struggle. (Umoja, 1987d) connects these conditions for peasant and worker women:

Peasant women in their role as producers for subsistence were particularly affected by the changes brought about by colonialism. The forced migration of men led to changes in the pre-colonial division of labour between men and women, the women taking over a larger share of '*shamba*' (land) labour and marketing. Thus, peasant women were overburdened by having to carry out their domestic tasks in addition to doing the work previously done by men and producing for the domestic and international market.

As land became scarce, peasant women were forced to seek work on farms and as domestic labour in European homes, thus colonialism led to the emergence of women workers. Women were also forcibly recruited as labourers under the guise of "awaiting substitution by their male relatives". The conditions under which women worked were appalling. Apart from the exploitative low wages, women workers lived in deplorable housing, were provided with inadequate medical facilities and were denied all rights.

Kenyan women's role in the resistance to imperialism, therefore, has to be understood within the context of peasant and workers' struggles against imperialism.

Umoja (1987d) goes on to give a good number of examples of women leaders and activists in Mau Mau. These include the following:

Field Marshall Muthoni joined Mau Mau and went to the forest because she believed that the people had to get back their land from the white men who had grabbed it from them. Muthoni's bravery, dedication and qualities of leadership earned her deep respect among her comrades and she rose to the rank of Field Marshall.

Salome Owiri from Ugenya, Siaya, was a Committee member of the Kenya African Union, the Treasurer of the East African Federation of Labour and was active in the struggle and "would organise secret delivery of food to those arrested for taking part in the freedom struggle". Salome was "detained numerous times for her activities in the liberation movement, was tortured and beaten in an effort to force her to reveal the secrets of Mau Mau, but she remained steadfast".

Some of the women held in Camp NO. 9 at Kamiti - the women's detention camp - were Rebeka Njeeri, Sera Serai, Cecilia Wanjiku, Wangui Gakuru, Priscilla Wambaki, Nyagiciru Mbote, Flora Wanjugu, Miriam Wanjiru Ndegwa, Wanjiku Gordan, Nyamacaki Kagonde and many others. In all there were more than 200 women detainees in this camp alone. Among them were wives of Mau Mau leaders like Mukami Kimathi, Muthoni wa Mathenge Mirugi and many others. These women are an inspiration for their dedication and courage in the struggle.

Muthoni Mathenge was born in 1926 in Kihome, Gitugi Village, Nyeri. Her involvement in the struggle commenced during the oath taking which was done first in her compound and later in the forest. She mobilised women, men and children into joining the movement and urged them to take up arms and fight. She also mobilised young women and trained them in the methods of acquiring guns and bullets from the enemy and passing them on to the fighters. She was also involved in the administration of the oath and in composing Mau Mau songs that were used to mobilise people. Muthoni Mathenge was subjected to brutal torture by colonial police who wanted her to reveal the whereabouts of her husband General Mathenge. Some of the torture methods included the insertion of a glowing cigarette into her ear. This did not deter her and she went into the forest where she continued the struggle. She prepared food for the fighters and supplied them with medicine... Muthoni was arrested and detained at Kamiti prison in 1955. She spent more than four years in prison.

Hannah Kung'u was another woman fighter who devoted her entire youth to the struggle for independence. She was greatly influenced by her father Kung'u wa Gichia, who was himself an active freedom fighter and used to make guns at his home from water pipes. These home-made guns were then smuggled to the KLFA (Mau Mau) in the Mt. Kenya and Nyandarua forests. Hannah took her first oath of loyalty [to Mau Mau] while still a young woman. Hannah was active in mobilising people to sign petitions for the release of their detained leaders. Collecting signatures involved travelling the country and mobilising people to support the campaign. She was also involved

in the various demonstrations called in protest at the imprisonment of people's leaders. At one such demonstration, the pregnant Hanna was kicked by colonial police, causing a premature birth. Hannah also acted as a courier, carrying guns and food to the freedom fighters. She provided cover for the freedom fighters in her house. Hannah was jailed for her activities in the freedom movement.

Some of the women in the detention camps had been arrested for their activities in publishing underground resistance papers. One such woman was Judith Nyamurwa Mworio who had continued the work of publishing *Mumenyereri* after her husband Henry Mworio was sent on a nationalist delegation to London. Nyamurwa was arrested in the offices of the newspaper and was taken to detention camp with her baby son Kinyanjui.

Next to the women's detention camp at Kamiti was the women's prison for those Mau Mau women fighters who had been tried in court and given life sentences for their active participation in the war of liberation. Among the prisoners were guerrilla leaders like Wanjira wa Kimiti, Wambui Gacanja, Muthoni wa Gakuru and others. Their punishment involved burying convicted Mau Mau guerillas. In one last act of defiance, they used to bury their executed comrades with full military honours, facing Mount Kenya where they believed the God of Mau Mau resided. Despite brutal beatings by jail guards who were trying to prevent them from carrying this last act of honour for their fallen comrades, they persisted defiantly and their jailers were forced to concede defeat and let them carry on.

Women combatants proved to be as good as the men in the forest. A good example is provided by the attack on Kanyota Post at Kiamariga in Nyeri District. In July 1953, a woman, Wamuyu Gakuru, successfully led the attack on this post. The detention camp was completely demolished and 200 Mau Mau prisoners were freed. People were full of admiration of Wamuyu's commanding ability and were particularly impressed with her use of the Sten gun.

Wanjiku Waring'u, also known as Mama Kamenge. She served on

the Mau Mau War Council, responsible for providing food, shelter, concealment for fighters in Nairobi, and transportation when they had to move to new bases. (Source: Nazmi Durrani, Nairobi, personal communications).

The Kenya Committee For Democratic Rights for Kenya Africans (1952-60) gave some more examples of women Mau Mau activists, some reproduced in the section on Mau Mau Infrastructure.

Such records in women's involvement in the War of Independence are not part of the history as it is taught in schools and colleges, nor are a majority of people aware of this aspect of the struggle. Yet this is an essential ingredient of social and political liberation. As Umoja (1987d) says: "The involvement of women in the Mau Mau war of liberation clearly shows that it is only when women are active participants in struggle against imperialism that the women question can begin to be tackled'.

RESISTANCE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Three Pillars of Resistance Attacked⁶

The three pillars of resistance – Mau Mau, trade union organisations and people's forces - that were responsible for the achievement of independence were systematically attacked by imperialism and rendered powerless in order to ease the establishment of neo-colonialism. Mau Mau fighters in the forests were killed in large numbers by colonial military forces and those who continued the struggle were hunted down and killed; others who came out in good faith at independence were ruthlessly murdered by independent Kenya's armed forces.

The trade union movement was weakened by legal attacks on militant trade union movement and the banning of the EATUC and the detention of its militant leaders. But the colonial government had to use its military to suppress the working class movement, just as it had done against Mau Mau guerrillas. Gupta (1981) says:

On 28 April, the EATUC, in a 200,000 strong meeting demanded the complete independence for East African territories. Later the government refused permission to hold May Day rally. In the preceding weeks government declared the EATUC 'not a registered body', and arrested Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai on charge of being officials of an unregistered trade union.⁶ Following the arrest of Fred Kubai and Makhan Singh, within a matter of hours, the workers of Nairobi struck work. This strike and the consequent demonstration was one of the greatest in the history of Kenyan labour movement. Unprecedented armed force was used against the workers. One would have thought a war had broken out. Not content with baton charges and tear gas, the government employed Auster spotter aircraft, RAF planes, Bren-gun carriers, armoured cars and armoured trucks. By 28 May, it was reported in the Press that at least 800 workers were behind bars.

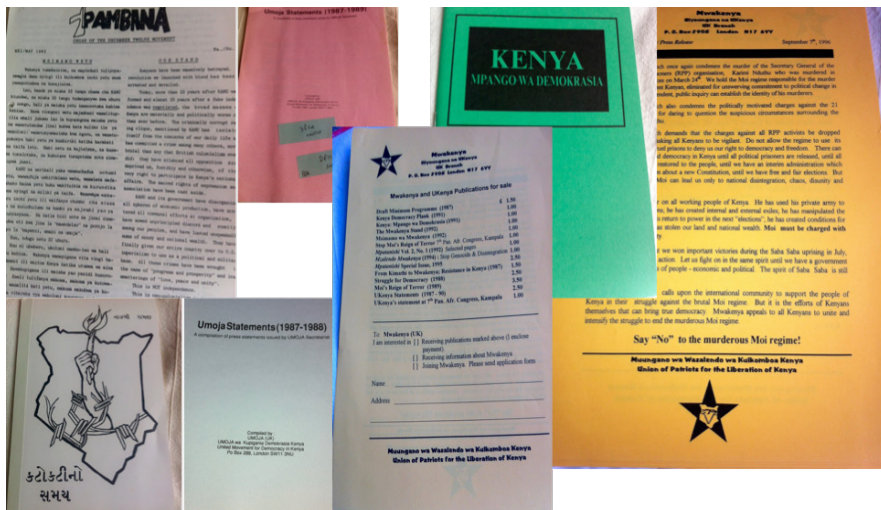
6 pp. 282 of Kenya's War of Independence

At the same time, money from USA poured in to create a compliant trade union movement under Tom Mboya. This charted a non-militant role for trade unions and strengthened the earlier colonial policy of diverting trade-union movement from political struggle for independence.

The third pillar, people's forces, had been under attack by colonialism with moves such as the construction of concentration camps, detention and terror by the Homeguard and Police Reserve forces.

Thus all the avenues of militant political action were banned. The banning of opposition political parties followed. In 1969, the Kenya People's Union, the only opposition party ever to be registered in Kenya, was banned, its leadership arrested and detained. Thus ended the one chance of open politics in Kenya. All political activities now went underground as did the expression of any independent ideas and opinions. The murder of Pio Gama Pinto at his house in Nairobi in 1965 had signalled this new period of repression in Kenya. The banning of KPU completed this phase of silencing any opposition by legal or illegal means. Henceforth the battlefield shifted to the underground.

Opposition Continues



INFORMATION RESISTANCE



Throughout the 1970s underground groups flourished and articulated their vision of a Kenya free from capitalism and imperialism, issuing various underground pamphlets. These included *Mwanguzi* and *Kenya Twendapi* which questioned the direction Kenya was taking after independence under the new elite. Many former Mau Mau combatants began to recount their experiences and stated that they had not suffered during the anti-colonial struggles merely to see a minority elite getting all the benefits of independence. Many such views could not be published within Kenya and were published overseas. Among the best known are Karigo Muchai's *The Hardcore* (1973), Ngugi Kabiro's *The Man in the Middle* (1973) and Mohammed Mathu's *The Urban Guerrilla* (1974), all published in Canada by the Liberation Information Centre (LSC) with path-breaking introductions by Donald Barnett, the Director of LSC, who was part of the "collective effort" in writing and distributing one of the most important document in Kenya's history, *The Struggle for Kenya's Future*.⁷

The murder in 1975 of the popular politician, J. M. Kariuki, brought out a national unanimity in anti-government feelings. It also saw the publication and distribution of a large number of underground leaflets in support of basic human and democratic rights.

⁷ The document is reproduced in Appendix.

The popularity of songs and plays performed at the Kamiriithu Community Centre in 1977 once again showed that the Kenyan people had rejected the elite politics and culture promoted by the government but were in support of progressive content in politics, art and drama. Events were to show that the government would not tolerate such expression of free ideas. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, one of the authors of the play performed at Kamiriithu, was detained and the open-air theatre constructed by workers and peasants was razed to ground by government bulldozers. This was the largest open-air theatre in Africa and had the added attraction that it was far from urban centres, in the countryside with peasants and local plantation and other workers forming the actors, audience and sponsors of the cultural activities. It now became clear to all that no public expression of any ideas or opinion not in agreement with imperialism was possible in Kenya. Such expression had of necessity to go underground. This lesson bore fruit in the late 1970s and 1980s when a popular underground press flourished, with a large number of leaflets being issued.

In general, the underground leaflets of 1970s reflected the contradictions of the times. Many were written by school, college and university students who played an important role in mobilising public opinion on important issues. The writers of these leaflets were also conscious, as *Africa Events* (1990a) put it, "of the class dimensions of the post-colonial Kenya society and they often tried to show the connections between Kenya's problems - not in tribal or personality lines - but in terms of what they called 'the neo-colonial path' of development opted for by the government. The leaflets bearing Kiswahili names became part of a vigorous underground press that took a very different line on national and international affairs from that of the established press."

Gradually resistance became an everyday feature of life. The extent and strength of this resistance may not immediately be obvious to a casual observer, hidden as they are by the silence of the official and corporate media. Such resistance can be examined at three levels. First, the resistance of workers, peasants, students and that of the 'whole nation'. This is the general response of the working people of Kenya to their social oppression and economic exploitation under the neo-colonial policies of the government. The second level reflects the organised, underground resistance that has given an ideological and organisational direction to the resistance of the people. The

resistance at the third level was based overseas but which reflected, supported and was part of the resistance within Kenya. These two aspects of resistance - local and foreign - came together as a joint force to oppose the local ruling class and its imperialist backers.

Worker Resistance

Worker resistance throughout the country was in the forefront of direct action against oppressive laws and economic exploitation through strikes and related actions, reminiscent of the practice during the colonial period. Seen as an overall systematic resistance, these strikes and other struggles helped to build a movement against the regime, which had come down heavily against trade unions. It banned strikes and imprisoned leadership of trade unions. And, in the end, the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU) was affiliated into the ruling party, KANU, thus ending its role as a workers' organisation to fight for economic and political rights of working people. But this did not suppress working class militancy as militant activists and shop stewards, isolating the official leadership, took the real leadership. Year after year, thousands of workers broke KANU laws and went on strikes for their rights.

When Moi came to power in 1978, he enforced the blind chanting of the slogan *Nyayo* demanding that people blindly follow in his footsteps without question or debate, as he was following the footsteps of the previous President, Jomo Kenyatta. A particularly significant development, indicating greater readiness to voice open opposition to the regime and to Moi personally, was the resolution passed by over 1,000 shop stewards at a meeting at Solidarity House in Nairobi to make arrangements for the Labour Day celebrations in April, 1989. They resolved that "they will answer *njaa, njaa*⁸ ('hunger', 'hunger') instead of *nyayo*, *nyayo* to the *harambee*⁹ call in the forthcoming Labour Day celebrations."¹⁰

8 *Njaa* (Kiswahili): hunger, famine; *Nyayo* (Kiswahili): footsteps, referring to Moi's policy of following Kenyatta's footsteps in ensuring KANU dictatorship and pro-imperialist policies.

9 *Harambee* (Kiswahili): Pulling or working together. Kenyatta used the slogan to silence opposition to his rule and to extract funds from Kenyans. Most of the "voluntarily" raised funds ended up in the pockets of the elite instead of being used for the intended purpose - development projects.

10 Daily Nation, 17-04-1989.

The significance of this lies in the fact that the workers had bypassed the government-controlled COTU in their resistance and instead created their own organisation to continue their struggle. In addition, over a thousand activists organising and coming together was no mean an achievement in a country where a meeting of over five people was illegal if an official licence had not been obtained. Moreover the secret police monitored and suppressed any such democratic activity. The workers overcame all these obstacles to bring to the forefront the most important failure of the government - the economic mismanagement that brought vast fortunes to a select few (including Moi who was reputed to be the 5th richest man in the world) and untold misery to the majority of people.

But it is the daily struggles of the workers that gave true significance to the growing worker movement in Kenya in this period. Not willing to accept the situation, which meant daily erosion of their already very low standard of living, the workers intensified their struggles for a decent living wage and their economic, social and political rights. Mwakenya's (1987b) publication, *Kenya - Register of Resistance, 1986*, breaks down the workers' demands into three categories:

- Economic Demands; for higher wages, land and employment.
- Social Demands; safety at places of work, improved working conditions, adequate health facilities, adequate and relevant education.
- Political Demands; right to organise, right to assembly, union rights, support other workers, liberation from the entire oppressive system.

It is significant that Kenyan workers, as well as Mwakenya, saw workers' rights in the same way as Mau Mau did: that workers' rights should include social and political as well as economic rights as legitimate demands of the trade union movement. This was the key demand of the trade union movement as set up by Makhan Singh, Fred Kubai, Bildad Kaggia and others during the colonial period under the East African Trade Union Congress. This aspect is further explored in Durrani (2015b). The colonial administration, as well as the independent Kenyan government, legislated to remove workers' political

rights from trade union remit - an aspect that has gravely weakened the trade union movement in Kenya. The same laws are in operation in Britain today with similar results.

Workers' resistance in this period took various forms: strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, work-to-rule, refusal to accept unfair practices. The media has been forced by the regime not to report fully on such militancy or to underplay their revolutionary significance. An examination of some worker resistance in the first few months of 1989, taken from Mwakenya (1985-89): *Upande Mwingine*, shows the extent of such resistance:

- 2000 Mombasa Municipal Council workers went on strike for more wages (January).
- 100 workers of the Gaturi Farmers Co-op Society, in Embu went on strike and demonstrated for their rightful wages (January).
- 150 workers of Nzoia County Council in Trans Nzoia went on strike for wages
- 600 workers in the open-air workshops went on strike and demonstrated when the Thika police tried to evict them from their work area. They attacked the police, many of whom were injured (January).
- 630 Kitale Municipality workers went on strike for increased wages.
- 300 workers of Rolmil Kenya Ltd in Kiambu went on a go-slow strike for increased wages, house allowance, leave entitlement and travelling allowance (January).
- 700 workers of the Pan-African Paper Mills, Webuye went on strike and fought police and the paramilitary GSU with stones, pieces of wood and acid (March).
- 200 workers of Lanar Road Construction Co., Bungoma held a demonstration in support for their demands for higher wages and better working conditions (April).

- 100 workers of the Athi River Mining Ltd went on strike for higher wages (May).
- 180 workers of Atta Ltd, Mombasa went on strike for higher wages in spite of being faced by armed police (May).
- 200 workers of Cosmo Plastics Ltd, Nairobi went on strike for better working conditions and right to permanent work after being considered ‘casuals’ after 8 years of work (May).
- 250 workers of Afrolite Ltd, Nairobi went on strike for higher wages (June).
- 350 workers of Woodmakers (K) Ltd, Nairobi went on strike for higher wages (June).

These are just a few examples of strikes in the first six months of 1989. The actual number of workers taking strike action had been consistently increasing. Whereas 42,527 workers went on strike in 1986, the figure had jumped to 110,870 in 1988, indicating a higher level of militancy among workers. It should also be noted that as strikes were illegal in Kenya, workers going on strike risked losing their jobs and facing other “punishment”. In addition, the Government’s response to all strikes was to send in armed police and GSU (General Service Unit)¹¹ so striking workers, especially their leaders, ran the risk of being beaten up and held in remand or imprisoned where they got tortured as a matter of routine. Yet strikes continued.

Over the ten year period since Moi came to power, the situation of workers got increasingly harsh. Not only was there more unemployment (often hidden in official figures), but even those in paid employment who got the official minimum wage (not all workers got this) could not afford to maintain

¹¹ The General Service Unit (GSU) is a paramilitary wing of the Kenyan Military and Kenyan Police, consisting of highly trained police officers and special forces soldiers, transported by seven dedicated Cessnas and three Bell helicopters. Having been in existence since the late 1940s, the GSU has fought in a number of conflicts in and around Kenya, including the 1963 – 1969 Shifta War and the 1982 Kenyan coup. The Kenyan police outlines the objectives of the GSU as follows, “to deal with situations affecting internal security throughout the Republic, to be an operational force that is not intended for use on duties of a permanent static nature, and primarily, to be a reserve force to deal with special operations and civil disorders”. Wikipedia. Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Service_Unit_\(Kenya\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Service_Unit_(Kenya)) [Accessed: 05-04-17].

themselves and their families with the ever escalating price rises of basic material needs. As the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank increased pressure for anti-worker policies, as the transnationals increased their super-profits, as Moi and those around him corruptly drained away the country's wealth, the burden of these policies fell on the shoulders of working people. The increasing number and intensity of strikes, work stoppages, demonstrations and similar actions remained the main weapons available to the working class in their struggle against a regime that sought to satisfy, not the interests of the majority of people, but those of foreign and local elite who drained national resources. In this situation, there was an increase in worker militancy and strikes became routine.

Mwakenya (1987a) provides a good summary of workers' resistance and links it to peasants' resistance:

Workers have been hit hardest by the repressive colonial dictatorship through slave wages, arbitrary bans on strikes, police violence against striking workers and the co-option of official trade union leadership by the state. Nevertheless workers have been at the forefront in the struggle against the oppressive system. The underground workers organ *Upande Mwingine* shows that in 1986 alone there were over 75 cases of major strikes involving over 49,000 workers in various factories, commercial premises and other institutions all over the country. This parallels similar actions of defiant demonstrations by peasant and small traders. In the same year there were 35 recorded incidents involving over 15,000 peasants. What is documented for 1986 reflects the pattern of workers/peasants revolts since independence. Taken as a whole, the workers strikes and the peasant revolts and demonstrations between 1963 and the present amount to a mass movement against the neo-colonial economic and social system.

This naturally leads to understanding resistance by peasants.

Peasant Resistance

For hundreds of years, Kenyan people's resistance to foreign armies of occupation and plunder had, at its centre, peasant resistance to the killings, massacres, forced labour, eviction from and confiscation of land, the

destruction of livestock and other properties. It was the issue over land that initially gave impetus to the War of Independence against British colonialism. The resistance movement that finally brought independence in 1963 had, significantly, the aim of returning land and freedom to the people. Mau Mau was forged as an alliance between the rural and urban proletariat on the one hand, and the peasants on the other. Thus land and control over natural resources have always been a key factor in Kenyan people's resistance.

Under the KANU regimes of Kenyatta and Moi, issues relating to the return of people's land were not resolved, instead the local and settler elites and transnational corporations consolidated their grip on this basic national resource. They have in fact been further aggravated. Landlessness, the single most significant issue in Kenya before and after independence, continued to increase. People were forced to squat on their own lands and finally forced out of land altogether. Land shortage was particularly acute in Central and Western Kenya and at the Coast. The Coast has had years of land problems as whole townships and vast areas were handed over to foreign multinationals and local speculators aligned to the powerful political elite for quick profit. The most fertile lands in the highlands were easily available to transnational agribusiness (for example, Brooke Bond and Del Monte) who 'own' millions of acres while peasants were crowded over marginal plots. There was also a small, but powerful, class of Kenyan landowners, led by politicians, with an insatiable greed for more and more land.

An additional factor under Moi was his foreign policy, which benefited imperialist powers. He won Western support by handing over strategic areas for U.S defence and military use, particularly in Northern Kenya and at the port in Mombasa. This, together with the finds of oil and other minerals, meant that pastoralists and peasants were being hounded out of their ancestral homes without any provision of alternate means of survival. In fact, the Moi-KANU regime declared war on Kenyan Somali nationality, which he had tried to suppress by massacres, mass arrests, detentions, jailing and torture. Ever faithful to the advice of IMF and World Bank, the neo-colonial regime additionally put peasants under immense economic pressures.

All these factors resulted in the Kenyan peasant and pastoralist reverting to their colonial practices of resistance. No week passed without reports of

peasant resistance to the Moi government's policies and attacks on government officials.

The following is a selection, again from *Upande Mwingine* records, of peasant resistance during the first half of 1987:

- 400 angry peasants of Igembe, Meru marched to offices of Kenya Tea Development Authority to protest at lack of transport for their tea (Jan.).
- Busia peasants boycotted deliveries of cotton in protest at not being paid their dues on time (Jan.).
- 1000 Gilgil peasants refused to follow orders of government officials in connection with land ownership (January).
- 21 peasants of Soi, Kakamega beat up a government official (Feb).
- Peasants without land refused to follow government orders to vacate government land at Kerio East, Elgeyo Marakwet. (Feb).
- More than 1000 angry peasants demonstrated against delays in payment for previous year's coffee crop, Gachuku, Nyeri. They had to face terror from riot police. (Feb).
- 100 peasants at Three Rivers Farm at Trans-Nzoia defended their rights to their 600 acre farm being claimed by a local politician whose family member was killed during the confrontation (March)
- Peasants growing sugar joined hands with workers of Nzoia Sugar Co, Bungoma and set a 700 hectare sugar plantation on fire (March).
- 1000 peasants fought angry battles with armed police in protest at the Leisure Lodge Hotel in Ukunda at the Coast which was claiming their 300 acre farm. The police shot one peasant dead and injured another, while 7 policemen were also injured (March).
- 2,500 peasants defied a government order to leave government land at Mt. Elgon, Bungoma (April).

- 1000 peasants refuse to obey government Chief to leave their 300 acre farm at Diani, Kwale (May).
- 3,000 peasants at Muhoroni, Kisumu refused to follow orders from government officials and KANU politicians to contribute 3/- shillings for every ton of sugar (May).
- 1000 peasants defy government orders to vacate their land within 21 days so that a private company can take it over, Diani, Kwale (May).
- 50 peasants marched from Narok to Nairobi in protest at the interference from a Minister and administrative officials in their farm's elections (May).
- Peasants at Olokurto, Narok, refused to leave government land and defied police who had been sent to force them out.
- 5000 coffee-growing peasants at Murang'a refused to harvest coffee for two months in their struggle against Kagima Coffee Co-operative Society (May).

The above examples give an indication of the geographical breath of peasant resistance. It was present throughout the country. Peasants used varying methods of demanding their rights and often used violence against corrupt government officials and armed police and officials of transnational corporations. At the same time, because of the shortage of land which resulted in high cost, it often became necessary for a large number of peasants to pull their resources to purchase one farm. This came in useful when they faced common problems: thousands of owners found strength in defying government directives, whereas individual plot owners may fear taking direct action. These examples show that peasants as a class joined hands with workers in resisting the policies of the government. Conditions were ripening in the countryside for a more systematic and organised resistance by peasants. Underground resistance movements got much support from the peasants. Indeed the government's use of the army against peasants showed its fear of this resistance building up into a formidable force.

Student Resistance

Together with workers and peasants, students became the third force that actively opposed the neo-colonial Government. Students in Kenya had always voiced the concerns and views of the struggling people. It is the youth who assumed the role of articulating the political and economic consciousness and aspirations of the working people of the country. The youth made up over 50% of the population and derived their political consciousness from the material conditions of their own lives as well as from the experiences of their parents who in the main were workers and peasants.

The government attempted to turn students into docile acceptors of whatever they were taught. School, college and university syllabi had been controlled to remove any progressive ideas, similarly removing the militant ideology and aims of Mau Mau and the War of Independence. Their cultural and social activities were vetted to ensure no mention of any local relevant events which could inspire independent thought took place. In short, the whole educational process was geared to produce unthinking people who aped foreign bourgeois ways and agreed to all *nyayo* ideas.

But students never accepted this. They consistently resisted not only the colonial and imperialist-orientated elements of the education system itself, but also resisted the socio-economic system that blindly followed Western capitalist ideas which encouraged corruption. They instead sought a united national student movement which would ensure free circulation of ideas and links with fellow students from Africa and other progressive students from around the world.

The strength of student resistance was indicated in 1988 when thousands of students throughout the country went on strike. Just as an example, the students from the following schools were on strike within two months, September and October, as recorded by Mwakenya's *Upande Mwingine*:

Murang'a College of Science and Technology; Kenyatta University (5,000 students); Kenya Science Teachers College (800 students); Kisii Teachers Training College; Moi Teacher Training College, Eldoret (650 students); Nyabola Girls High School, Kasipul, South Nyanza;

Nginda Girls High School, Murang'a; thousands of first year students on National Youth Service at Gilgil from Universities of Nairobi, Kenyatta, Egerton and Moi fought running battles with riot police and NYS after many women students had been raped by the servicemen, some students were said to have been shot down. Nyanchwa Teacher Training College, Kisii; Murang'a Teachers College (500 students); Nkuene High School, Imenti, Meru; Itatani Secondary School, Machakos; Mutungulu Girls High School, Kangundo; Ngere High School, Kisumu; Ruaraka High School, Nairobi; Chulaimbo High School, Kisumu, Ringa High School, Kasipul, Nyanza; Malava Girls High School, Kakamega; Agoro Sare High School, South Nyanza; Maragoli High School, Vihiga, Kakamega; Gendia Secondary School, Kendu Bay, South Nyanza; Kenyoro High School Kisii; Ongaro High School, Kisii; Matare High School, Kisii, Manyatta High School, Kisii; Sori High School, Nyakite, Kisii; Agenga High School, Kisii; Mwer High School, Siaya; Sengani High School Machakos; Kirimara High School, Nyeri; Isebania School; Kisumu Technical School; Onjiko High School, Kisumu; Sigomere High School, Siaya; Kambere High School, Gem, Siaya; Miwani High School, Kisumu; Nyabondo High School, Kisumu; Sameta High School; Jomo Kenyatta High School, Nakuru ...

... the list seemed almost endless. This was an indication of the serious opposition faced by the government in the education field. Different issues sparked strikes in different schools but overall the message from students to the government was clear: they were no longer willing to accept mismanagement, corruption, poor educational standards and lack of teachers and books. They were not satisfied with silent protests, but took action to change the situation. Indeed the government managed to overcome the serious crisis in education only by closing the school year early. But the crisis was not by any means over. The following year, 1989, saw more school strikes taking place. It is interesting to note that in many cases teachers and parents joined hands with students. Again, in most cases the presence of armed police did not deter students. Seen in conjunction with worker and peasant resistance, these student activities gave a national perspective to resistance to the Moi Government.

Students were also in the forefront of writing and distributing underground pamphlets setting out their demands. This was especially true of universities. Students at the University of Nairobi, for example, produced a vast amount of such literature, reflecting the militancy of the students there. Indeed a tradition of at least one enforced closure per year was the norm as the government dealt with student protests by closures. New repressive regulations were introduced after every closure, but this did not stop student militancy. Indeed most Student Union leaders ended up being thrown out of the University and being jailed or detained. For example, Mwandawiro Mghanga ended up with a 5-year jail term and Oginga Ogego with 10 years. The student newspaper produced at the School of Journalism of the University of Nairobi reflected socialist tendency among students, as Omanga & Buigutt (2017) show:

The Anvil was a student newspaper at the University of Nairobi launched in the mid-1970s after its predecessor The Platform was shut down and its editors suspended from the university. Initially designed to be less militant, The Anvil forged a quasi-Marxist identity at a time of both widespread post-colonial disillusionment in Kenya and a largely conformist ‘patriotic’ press. In this context, the paper shows how ‘Marx’ became a symbol through which The Anvil, arguably the most fearless publication of its time, summoned a politicized ‘student’ public by offering alternative imaginaries of the nation. Drawing from literature on nationalism, publics and from media theory, the paper shows how this socialist lens was routinely used to interpret both local and off-shore events as a tool for proximate political agency by drawing on black cosmopolitanisms, anti-colonial sentiment and Cold War politics.

The Anvil started in 1976 as a training newspaper at the School of Journalism, with sponsorship from the Danish Agency for International Aid (DANIDA). It “was mysteriously shut down” (Omanga & Buigutt (2017) in 1992. Meanwhile the Student Union itself published its own newspapers, including *University Platform* and *Sauti ya Kamukunji* published in the early 1980s by the Student Organisation of University of Nairobi (SONU). They were all calling for radical change in Kenya to settle unsolved issues at the time of independence and so attracted Government ire.

Mwakenya (1987a) summarises student resistance:

After the banning of K.P.U. , democratic opposition was led by University and Secondary school students. Nairobi and Kenyatta University students unions played a major role in fighting for democracy and human rights, and opposing neo-colonialism and foreign military bases in Kenya. They demonstrated in the streets, wrote leaflets, spoke in public and student gatherings, and in so many ways helped expose the reactionary character of the KANU regime.

The significance of all these student activities is not only in its own time period. They represented a new generation which refused to accept a corrupt, man-eat-man society. The future of Kenya in reality lay in their hands. And they indicated their rejection of the regime's policies.

Progressive Members of Parliament also joined the growing movement of national resistance. Mwakenya (1987a) provides an overview of national resistance:

In parliament radical MPs as individuals or as informal caucuses also offered democratic resistance. Resistance also found expression in culture and the Arts, in particular in books and theatre. But there was a price to pay for this democratic resistance. The end of the 1970s saw student movements being crushed and many students and lecturers maimed by police and G.S.U. violence. Others were imprisoned or banished from the university. Members of parliament were murdered and others imprisoned; social welfare organisations were banned and radical cultural centres destroyed. There is no doubt that during this period, the students bore the main burden of democratic consciousness, often paying for their patriotism with expulsions, imprisonments or deaths.

The students resistance supplemented that of the workers, manifested in the increase in the number of strikes and that of the peasants who showed their resistance by attacking corrupt co-operative officials and at times even uprooting cash crops imposed on them.

The period 1970-80 can rightly be called the decade of struggle for democracy. The prevailing thinking among progressive people was summed up by Willy Mutunga:

Imperialist capital, locked in the hire-purchase business, pervades both aspects (productive forces and means of ownership) of production of our material goods. The roles which modern imperialism has imposed on Kenya find effective expression in our laws. Nobody denies that Kenya is an exploited country where workers and peasants are exploited by imperialist capital of the international bourgeoisie, who are the ruling class in Kenya. The bourgeoisie own the means of production here. They (compradors) will live and die with imperialism.¹²

The whole nation resists...

Workers, peasants, students ... all had their own forms of struggle against the unpopular elite government. But as Mwakenya (1987b) points out in the *Register of Resistance, 1987*, the lower petty bourgeois had also joined the ranks of those resisting and struggling against the government. The significant point about this was the vast numbers involved in this protest. For example, when teachers protested against the government's sudden policy of reducing their housing allowance in September 1988, almost 160,000 members of the Kenya National Union of Teachers planned to go on strike. So serious was this action that the government was forced to withdraw its planned reduction of housing allowance. Similarly over 80,000 drivers, *manambas*, *matatu* owners and other transport workers brought national transport to stand-still when they boycotted work in March 1988. It forced the Government to withdraw the new policies affecting the industry.

The unpopular 1988 'queuing' elections in which Moi won a false mandate, gave rise to massive election boycott and mass demonstrations against the fraudulent elections. Moi had hoped to prove his popularity to his international backers U.S.A., Britain, IMF and World Bank, and to give a democratic veneer to his dictatorial rule. In the event, the resistance of the voters robbed him of his 'victory'. Umoja (1988), in its publication, *The Struggle For Democracy in Kenya; Special Report on the 1988 General Elections in Kenya*

12 Quoted by Mdlongwa, "Kenya Laws are Vehicles of Imperialism" in Omanga and Buigutt (2017).

documented the resistance of the Kenya people to the elections. Thousands of people marched in protest at the 'cooked' elections results. For example, over 4,000 people including women and young children in Taveta marched over four miles from Daranjani to Taveta in protest against the falsification of election results. They stoned local government officials and forced the closure of all offices and shops. All communication links with the rest of the country were cut. Fierce battles raged between the people and the armed police who had to be reinforced by the para-military GSU (General Service Unit). Over 100 people, including women and children, were arrested; 10 people were seriously injured and had to be hospitalised. The police killed at least one man, aged 66.

Similar mass protests were organised throughout the country. They indicate a qualitative difference in the resistance. Mass protests were fast becoming a way of life in Kenya. Such protests brought together people from all classes opposed to the Government.

Similar mass tactics were used by the students of the University of Nairobi between November 13-15, 1988 when the Government arrested the entire student leadership. More than 3,000 students, reported Umoja (1987), "regrouped and a running battle between them and the (armed) police in the streets of Nairobi started".

But the largest and more significant mass demonstration took place in Mombasa where people's grievances with landlessness, unemployment, poor wages, and the presence of the hated U.S military were always just below the surface. The Mombasa mass protest arose as a result of the government suddenly cancelling a rally organised by Muslim youth on October 30, 1987. Umoja (1987b) sets the scene:

More than 4000 people formed an orderly procession to seek an audience with the Provincial Commissioner (PC). But instead of the PC holding a dialogue with the people, he unleashed armed police at them.

In self-defence, the people faced the police. With strong involvement of Muslim women and the youth, they boldly attacked the provincial headquarters. They later marched to the Central Police Station and attacked it too. The youth

adopted guerrilla hit and run tactics in the narrow streets of the Old Town area. The subsequent hide and seek continued till about 2 o'clock in the morning.

The people's anger at what happened to them on October 30 erupted once again on 4 November during the massive procession to mark the birth of Prophet Mohammed. The youth used the religious procession to once again air their defiance and express their demands for the right to organise and assemble.

There was obviously a strong organisation behind the mass protests. They even issued a record of their side of the struggle in an underground pamphlet entitled *Yaliotokea hapa Mombasa mnamo tarehe 30-1-87*. (Events in Mombasa on 30 January, 1987).

Kenyan people turned to other forms of resistance as well. Many parts of Nairobi, for example, were closed areas to the police, similar to the situation during the Mau Mau period. Any police officer who ventured there ended up being murdered. Increasing cases of death of policemen and government officials at the hands of people occurred. The following are some examples from *Upande Mwingine*:

- Police constable killed at Mathare in Nairobi (Sunday Times, 12-2-89)
- A policeman was shot in the leg at Nakuru after a policeman shot dead a woman (Sunday Times, 12-02-89)
- Senior superintendent of police was hacked to death by people of Lukoye, Mumias (Sunday Times, 12-02-89)
- A sub-locational KANU Vice-Chairman in Kakamega District, Gilbert Okello, was slashed to death by people (03-03-89). This is the second incident this year when a Kanu official in Kakamega was hacked to death.
- A Kanu youthwinger, Samuel Maba, was admitted to hospital with deep cuts on head and neck a victim of an incident similar to the above.

- Lawrence Mbare, the acting chief for Shamakhokho location in Hamisi was assaulted with a panga by local people. He was admitted to hospital (03-03-89).
- Constable Salim Limo was murdered at Huruma Estate, Nairobi on August 20 1988 (Daily Nation, 02-03-89).

The spirit of resistance was captured by a Kisumu woman who was being evicted by the Kisumu Municipal Council from her home where she had lived for over 15 years. In October 1988, Council askaris went to evict her. But the brave woman was ready for them. She first threw boiling water on them and then fought them off with a panga (machete), injuring them. The people had begun to say 'no' to exploitation and oppression. As *Upande Mwingine* said:

Wakati wo wote

Mahali po pote

Watu wakigandamizwa

Kisasi watalipizwa

Mapambano yatazuka.

(Rough English translation)

Every time

Every place

When people are oppressed

A price will have to be paid

The struggle will blossom everywhere.

That indeed was the situation in Kenya towards the end of 1990s with resistance to government policies.

Conclusion: Uhuru Bado¹³

“General, your tank is a powerful vehicle
It smashes down forests and crushes a hundred men.
But it has one defect:
It needs a driver.

General, your bomber is powerful.
It flies faster than a storm and carries more than an elephant.
But it has one defect:
It needs a mechanic.

General, man is very useful.
He can fly and he can kill.
But he has one defect:
He can think.”
— Bertolt Brecht

The history of Kenya parallels trends in many other countries, in Africa and elsewhere. The colonial government passes on power to a class it has created and nurtured and which ultimately rejects the interests of people who had borne the brunt of fighting colonialism. They have been relegated to the margins of the society by the new comprador class. There is a show-democracy underpinned by a number of political parties, but all serving the interest of the ruling classes on whose behalf they manage economic and political power. People are expected to believe that a change of parties at the so-called democratic elections will help their cause. This is a major mistake if followed. The crucial dividing line between the contending forces in Kenya is between those seeking “merely political change” and those who are seeking social transformation, as Furedi (1989) points out:

The danger of obscuring the conflict of interest between those whose objective is merely political change and those who aspire to social transformation is a theme stressed in the writings of Marx, Engels and

13 pp.336-341 of Kenya's War of Independence

Lenin. The experience of Uhuru in Kenya and more broadly in Africa and the calls for a 'Second Independence' from radical quarters confirm the continued relevance of Marx's observations.

The key issues of which class is in power and on whose behalf it rules is obscured by propaganda from the ruling classes. The contradiction between Homeguards and Mau Mau can be seen as the former looking for political change while the latter demanded social transformation. That contradiction has not yet been resolved. If the workers' forces are to continue the legacy of Mau Mau and fight for social transformation today, they will need to free themselves from the ideological and historical blinkers that imperialism has created for them. Liberating their minds from colonial and imperialist thinking entails recognising class struggles as the key reality in Kenya, before and after independence. Quoting Marx and Engels, Furedi (1989), warns of the danger that faces the working classes and people:

Marxist literature, with its emphasis on the primacy of class interests, anticipates the problem of alliances between different social forces fighting for national liberation. Marx and Engels warned about the fragile links that drew together conflicting interests around the struggle for freedom. In their writings they continually emphasized that it is often the propertyless masses that do all the fighting while the rich stand on the sidelines waiting to snatch the fruits of their victory:

It is self-evident that in the impending bloody conflicts, as in all earlier ones, it is the workers who, in the main will have to win the victory by their courage, determination and self-sacrifice. As previously so also in this struggle, the mass of the petty bourgeois will as long as possible remain hesitant, undecided and inactive, and then, as soon as the issue has been decided, will seize the victory for themselves, will call upon the workers to maintain tranquility and return to their work, will guard against so-called excesses and bar the proletariat from the fruits of victory. [Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1978), 'Address to the Central Authority of the League', in Marx and Engels: Collected Works, vol. 10, 1978].¹⁴

14 Marx and Engels, writing in 1850, have some relevant points to make about the situation in Kenya today.

The elections of 2017 have raised once again the question of what is the main contradiction in Kenya. The power-struggles between political parties broadly representing the interest of ruling classes are creating an illusion that they are fighting for all the people of Kenya. In the process, they are creating more divisions along nationality (the so-called tribes) lines, while obscuring class struggle. This strengthens the hold of capitalism and its corporations over Kenya and marginalises once again working people. Mutunga (2017) sums up the current situation in Kenya:

The Kenyan elite, like many in Africa, has not identified or supported our national interests. They do not represent us patriotically in national relations with either the West or the East, preferring to build their own personal power bases among foreign interests, national and international cartels (invariably called the licit and illicit economies, and rightly deemed “invisible government” that we NEVER elected.

By keeping us divided the Kenyan elite have been able to stay in power by violating our material needs at every turn. And, the invisible governments keep applauding, putting profits before us, the people.

Competition for political power has become an industry for the elite. Within the national strategic plans and visions lurk personal plans and visions of the elite on how profits will be made, resources raided, wasted, pillaged, and grabbed, so billions are generated so they can buy the next election.

The bottom line is - This status quo MUST GO!

And that is the struggle facing people in Kenya today. The status quo will not disappear on its own. It has too many powerful vested interests, local and foreign. It will need to be pushed out, just as Mau Mau pushed out colonialists.

*

This brief look at resistance activities in and outside Kenya indicates that resistance in Kenya has indeed become a way of life. While this brings this book to a close, the resistance continues in Kenya with many notable victories in changes to the Constitution and the freedom to form political parties.

However, Mwakenya's warning about *Moism With Moi* has indeed come true as new political parties and leaders emerge but the system that created the unequal, oppressive capitalist system remains in place, again supported by USA and Britain with additional support from one of imperialism's most oppressive ally, the Israeli apartheid state. But as history shows, resistance is always present where there is oppression and exploitation. The War of Kenya's Independence has achieved its early goal of independence from British colonialism. But its other goal of independence from economic and political bondage to imperialism is an on-going process that still has some way to go.

Kabubi's (2002) assessment of the legacy of Mau Mau provides a path for the future:

Mau Mau hastened Uhuru. If not for Mau Mau fighters, the colonialists would have stayed longer. There should be full official recognition of Mau Mau fighters after independence. There should be a Mau Mau museum and monuments. How can the younger generation be taught when Mau Mau's legacy is not preserved? The history of Mau Mau should be collected and records should be properly kept and relevant materials should be published. Only then will people appreciate what Mau Mau did for Kenya.

The comprador government and leaders of Kenya are not likely to follow this path, just as they are not prepared to follow Algeria's example in condemning colonialism. It remains for the people themselves to ensure that the voice of Mau Mau guerrillas and leaders, their actions and their vision are never forgotten and that they guide the direction of future government actions. They are the real foundations of Kenya's history and its future.

The history of Kenya, particularly in the independence period, shows the need for resistance parties and movements to come up with a clear ideological stand and have a vision that can inspire working people to stand up and fight for their rights. Mau Mau came up with a clear programme under the call for "land and freedom" which were the burning issues of the time. Equality and fairness were part of the demands of Mau Mau, as symbolised by Kimathi. Pio Gama Pinto articulated Mau Mau demands in the early years of independence. Militant trade unionists like Makhan Singh, Fred Kubai and Bildad Kaggia

and others put Mau Mau's vision into practice. Oginga Odinga was victimised for his call for socialism and J. M. Kariuki was murdered for his call to avoid a country with ten millionaires and 10 million beggars. He, among others, advocated a fair land policy.

In the independence period, once Kenya Peoples Union was banned by the comprador regime, it was the underground movements that came out with radical policies and programmes to oppose the conservative ones from KANU, which sought to disguise capitalism under the so-called "African Socialism" agenda as a way of maintaining the status quo. The December Twelve Movement - Mwakenya, among other underground movements, stood for socialism based on Marxist principles, an anti-imperialist outlook and showed a grasp of the nature of the class struggle in the country.

In contrast, the unstated policies of the main political parties in Kenya today are to protect the interest of capitalism and imperialism through an alliance of local elites and their international partners - the multinational corporations, under the watchful "guidance" of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organisation (WTO). State power in Kenya - as in other capitalist countries - is used to support this exploitative alliance at the expense of working people. Liberation movements in Kenya and in Africa would do well to base their policies on the three principles that are essential for real liberation from capitalism and imperialism: socialism, anti-imperialism and an alliance with working people in the all important class struggle.

There can be no better way to understand Kenya's past and to prepare for future battles of liberation than to study Pio Gama Pinto's analysis (Pinto, 1963a) at the time of independence, but which is even more relevant today:

Kenya's Uhuru must not be transformed into freedom to exploit, or freedom to be hungry and live in ignorance. Uhuru must be Uhuru for the masses - uhuru from exploitation, from ignorance, disease and poverty.

The sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of Kenya's freedom fighters must be honoured by the effective implementation of the policy - a democratic, African, socialist state in which the people have the right to be free from

economic exploitation and the right to social equality.

Events have shown, however, that the aims of the uhuru that Pinto and others died for have not been met even after 50 years of independence. Barnett's (1972) assessment is even more urgent today:

The story of "Mau Mau", Kenya's peasant revolt of 1952-56, as well as its aftermath in the years leading up to and following the "granting" of independence to this British colony, should be studied carefully for the lessons that can be learned from such bitter failures. Political independence without genuine decolonization and socialism yields continued misery and oppression for the peasant-worker masses. Karigo's prayer, as with those of other peasants and workers caught up in the web of neo-colonial accommodation after long years of struggle, will not be answered. His and their children will be forced to fight again.

It is hoped that this book can play a small part in enabling "peasant-worker masses", young and old, to learn and understand the lessons from the "bitter failures" that capitalism and imperialism inflicted on working people with the active assistance of their local allies. For them and for Kenya, the future is struggle.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Aiyar, Sana (2015): *Indians in Kenya: the Politics of Diaspora*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Barnett, Donald L. (1972): “Kenya: Two paths ahead”. Introduction to Muchai (1973).
- Bruce-Lockhart, Katherine (2014): “Unsound” Minds and Broken Bodies: The Detention of “Hardcore” Mau Mau women at Kamiti and Gitamalyu Detention Camps in Kenya, 1954–1960. Bufacchi, Vittorio (2017): Colonialism, Injustice And Arbitrariness. *Journal of Social Philosophy*. Volume 48 (2) 117–237.
- Corfield, F. D. (1960): *Historical Survey of the Origin and Growth of Mau Mau*. Cmd. 1030. London: HMSO.
- Durrani, Naila (2017): A brief Outline of Kenya Asian Participation in Kenya People’s Resistance Against Imperialism, 1884-1963. In Durrani, Nazmi, Naila Durrani and Eddie Pereira (2017).
- Durrani, Nazmi, Naila Durrani and Eddie Pereira (2017): *Liberating Minds, Restoring Kenyan History: Anti-imperialist Resistance by Progressive South Asian Kenyans, 1884-1965*. Nairobi: Vita Books.
- Durrani, Shiraz (2006): *Never Be Silent: Publishing and Imperialism in Kenya, 1884-1963*. London-Nairobi: Vita Books.
- Durrani, Shiraz (2018): *Kenya’s War of Independence: Mau Mau and its Legacy of Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism, 1948-1990*. Nairobi: Vita Books.
- Durrani, Shiraz (forthcoming): Pío Gama Pinto, the Assassinated Hero of the Anti-Imperialist Struggle in Kenya, 1927-1965. In: Durrani, Shiraz (Ed.): *Pío Gama Pinto, the Assassinated Hero of the Anti-Imperialist Struggle in Kenya, 1927-1965*.
- Edgerton, Robert B. (1990): *Mau Mau, an African Crucible*. London: I.B.Tauris.

- Furedi, Frank (1989): *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*. London: James Curry.
- Kabubi, Anna Wamuyu (2002): Interview, “A Fight of Her Own: Conversation with Anna Wamuyu Kabubi” [Mau Mau name, Cinda Reri]. “Women and Mau Mau”, Interview by S. M. Shamsul and Margaret Gachihi. *in*: Alam (2007).
- Kenya Committee for Democratic Rights for Kenya (London). (1952-60): “Kenya Press Extracts”. Photocopies of the Extracts available in the Kenya Liberation Library. The Committee was based at 86 Rochester Row, London. SW1.
- Kimathi, Dedan (1953). Letter to the Nairobi newspaper, *Habari za Dunia*. (Quoted in Odinga, 1967).
- Kinyatti, Maina wa (2008): *History of Resistance in Kenya, 1884-2002*. Nairobi: Mau Mau Research Centre.
- Likimani, Muthoni (1985): *Passbook Number F.47927: Women and Mau Mau in Kenya*. London: Macmillan.
- Mutunga, Willy (2017): Will the Kenyan elite ever grow up? *The Star* (Nairobi) . 16-09-17. Available at: https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/09/16/will-the-kenyan-elite-ever-grow-up_c1636126. [Accessed: 16-09-17]
- Mwakenya (1985-89): *Upande Mwingine*. Unpublished underground “monthly and annual documentation of the resistance deeds and actions of workers, peasants and students etc in industry, commerce, plantations, schools and colleges, carried out by *Upande Mwingine* [the Other Side], the underground workers’ Organ”, Mwakenya (1987b). Copies to be available at the Kenya Liberation Library being set up in Nairobi.
- Mwakenya (1987a): *Draft Minimum Programme*.
- Mwakenya (1987b): *Kenya; Register of Resistance*, 1986.
- Odinga, Oginga (1968): *Not Yet Uhuru*. London. Heinemann.
- Patel, Ambu H. (Comp.) 1963: *Struggle for Release of Jomo and His Colleagues*. Nairobi: New Kenya Publishers.

Patel, Zarina. (2006): *Unquiet; the Life and Times of Makhan Singh*. Nairobi: Zand Graphics.

Pereira, Benegal (2017): *Life and Times of Eddie H. Pereira (1915-1995) in Durrani, Nazmi, Naila Durrani and Benegal Pereira (2017): Liberating Minds, Restoring Kenyan History: Anti-Imperialist Resistance by Progressive South Asian Kenyans, 1984- 1965*. Nairobi: Vita Books.

Pinto, Pio Gama (1963): *Glimpses of Kenya's Nationalist Struggle. Pan Africa*. 12-12-1963. p.39. *Also published as a monograph: Nowrojee, Viloo and Edward Miller (Editors, 2014): Glimpses of Kenya's Nationalist Struggle by Pio Gama Pinto*. Nairobi: Asian African Heritage Trust.

Seidenberg, Dana April (1983): *Uhuru and the Kenya Indians: The Role of a Minority Community in Kenya Politics, 1939-1963*.

Singh, Makhan (1969): *History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.

Singh, Makhan (1980): *Kenya's Trade Unions: Crucial Years, 1952-56*. Nairobi: Uzima Press.

Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya (2013) [TJRC]: *Final Report*. Available at <http://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/tjrc/> [Accessed: 08-04-17]. Vol.IIA.

Umoja: (1987c). *Resistance in Northern Kenya, 1890-1963*. Background Paper presented at the Unity Conference of Patriotic, Democratic and Progressive Kenyan Organisations Abroad No. 1987/UC/BP/11.2 (2). London, 16-19 October 1987. Unpublished "draft copy for discussion".

World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU, 1952): *Terror in Kenya: The Facts Behind the Present Crisis*. London: WFTU.

Yaliotokea Hapa Mombasa Mnamo Tarehe 30-1-87. (What happened in Mombasa on 30 January, 1987). Underground leaflet, Mombasa.

PART 2: REFLECTIONS ON RESISTANCE

The Question of Nationalities in Kenya: A Force for Unity, not Division.

Reproduced from: Mpatanishi 1995

Questions of our times

The Question of Nationalities in Kenya: A Force for Unity, not Division

The following article by Juma Abbas¹⁵ is part of our internal debate on the questions of nationalities. It does not reflect the official policy of Mwakenya and is reproduced here to encourage greater debate and study on the question of nationalities. Readers are welcome to write articles giving other views or criticising the points made in this article. It is only in the context of such a debate that a proper understanding can result. Only then will we be able to produce appropriate policies and practices.

In the current situation when Moi, Biwott and Kanu have targeted various nationalities for attack, it becomes urgent for us to understand the nationalities question and set out our position on the various issues involved.

What is a Nation? What is a Nationality?

A nationality is a historically evolved, stable community of people who share common economic life, territory, language and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture. A common nationality culture encompasses the whole life style of a people, including food, dress, music, art, literature, style of housing, particular ways of farming and carrying on everyday life. A nationality is not necessarily the same thing as a state or a country or a nation.

The colonialists called our nationalities “tribes”, thus implying that they were primitive and uncivilised. Whereas the British nationalities such as the Scots, the English and the Welsh were never “tribes”, our people became tribes, the same way the American and Australian peoples were also referred to as

¹⁵ Name used at the time by Shiraz Durrani.

“tribes”. This use of negative terms for Black people is a reflection of cultural imperialism and at an ideological level seeks to justify the colonisation, the plunder and the massacre of the people of the countries subjugated by colonialism.

Colonialism was desperate to find any force that could divide African people. In the “divisions” of various nationalities, they found their answer. Colonial supremacy turned nationalities into primitive “tribes” which needed Western “civilising” influences. At every stage, they emphasised factors that *divided* African nationalities, and concealed factors that they shared. Colonialism used its vast media and educational resources to emphasise the myth of “African tribes” always at war with each other, always needing the colonial “civilisers” to restore peace.

It is ironic that many Black people use the same term “tribes” to describe themselves. They have internalised the message of inferiority passed on to them by the colonial or neo-colonial education and political system. It is no accident that the Voice of Kenya - a tool of the comprador regime - calls its nationality language broadcasting service “vernacular” service. The term “vernacular” was initially used during the time of the Roman Empire to refer to the “home-grown” slaves. The language of the slaves was the “vernacular”.

Kenya has people of over forty nationalities. The Gikuyu, the Luo, the Somali, the Asian and Arab Kenyans are some of them. Some nationalities have millions of people, others have thousands. Some nationalities are single units, others are made up of smaller units, and many different sub-groups go to make up the main nationality. The Kalenjin make up about 11 per cent of our population, the Maasai about 1.5 per cent; the Gikuyu 21 per cent; the Luo 13 per cent, and the Luhya make up 14 per cent.

In the long centuries of common development, our nationalities have created Kenya’s history, culture, politics and economy, and formed the united family of the Kenyan nation. The common identity or universality of being Kenyan is present in the ethnic characteristics or particularities of each nationality.

A nationality develops on the basis of relations among peoples, taking different forms in different historical stages. Progress and development in economic and social life have led to the amalgamation of peoples from clans and “tribes” into nationalities. The economic lives of people determine their lifestyle and

world outlook. The main unifying force in their lives is their relation with their natural surrounding, particularly land. People who occupied the same geographical area began to share common interests as survival requires that they co-operate to defeat their common enemies - wild animals, the elements etc at the level of nature.

At the social level, the need for joint labour to exploit natural resources brought people closer together. There evolved a common culture, language and custom among people who shared a common economic interest. This was the basis of the development of different nationalities. It was in the interest of each nationality to live in harmony with other nationalities around them and a healthy exchange of goods, ideas, had developed. This is not to say that there were no conflicts. There cannot be social life without contradictions. But it was colonialism that turned these conflicts into major antagonistic contradictions.

The Social Context

In a country such as Kenya, people have formed economic relations with each other on the basis of the main resource of survival - land. The primary social unit of production, after the family unit, is the nationality. Each nationality has protected itself from internal and external enemies to ensure its survival as a nationality. Thus every nationality in Kenya resisted colonialism, which was their primary enemy. The cultural resistance gave birth to anti-imperialist education system - e.g. Kikuyu Independent Schools Association - as well as songs, dances, newspapers, etc; the economic resistance gave birth to anti-colonial practices, e.g. the formation of Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation; the political resistance gave birth to nationality political organisations, e.g. Kikuyu Central Association, the Young Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association, the Taita Hills Association, the Indian Congress.

The nationality resistance against colonialism was such a powerful weapon that colonialism had to use all the force of oppression it commanded in order to suppress it. History records uncountable acts of massacres of the nationality people and destruction of nationality property by the British colonialists. They saw the resistance of nationalities as their main obstacle to colonial rule. They consequently targeted nationalities as their main enemy and sought to divide people along nationality - "tribal" - lines as the only way that colonialism

could survive.

The development of capitalist relations in Kenya has led to the rapid growth of the working class, whose *economic* basis for survival is through its survival as working class. This gave birth to various forms of working class resistance at cultural, economic and political levels. But this resistance of the working class was not waged in isolation from the peasants who were organised along nationality lines. It was this combined strength of the working class and the nationality-based peasants and pastoralists which came together in the powerful Mau Mau movement which dislodged colonialism from Kenya and had the effect of altering the history of colonialism in Africa and in the world.

It is clear that people can have different aspects or dimensions to their personal and social lives: thus a person can be a member of a particular nationality (say, Pokot) and at the same time be a member of a particular class (say, a worker) and also belong to a particular sex (say, a woman) and at the same time belong to a particular country (say, Kenya). In themselves these different aspects are not antagonistic, and it is possible for a Kenyan Pokot working class woman to be loyal to her nation, her nationality, her class, and to members of her sex. However, these aspects can become antagonistic when divisive policies are used by colonialism or a comprador bourgeoisie such as Moi's in order to ensure his personal and class dominance by using his nationality, class or sex as a divisive force.

Nations and Nationalities in Africa

The bourgeois nations in Europe developed during the transition from feudalism to capitalism. As a result of the rise of imperialist nations in Europe and their subsequent domination of the world, the development of other nations throughout the world, including Africa, has been arrested and distorted. One legacy of European direct colonial rule is the existence of numerous countries consisting of a number of separate nationalities. These nationalities do not live together as equals, but continue the unequal situation left by colonialism.

This inequality is the real reason for tension and contradictions between nationalities today - these contradictions are then exploited by the ruling classes to strengthen their hold over power. Moi is a very good example of

such a manipulator. The only way to ensure peace among nationalities is to eradicate inequalities, to accord all nationalities - whether a majority one, or a minority one in terms of numbers - equal rights.

Africa is a vast continent, and the lives, cultures, customs and life-styles of its people vary a great deal reflecting the different geographical, historical, political and social factors influencing their lives. But these differences were, in the main, never antagonistic. Different people were at different stages in economic development, but all lived in harmony with each other and with their natural environment. There were some internal struggles within these societies, but colonialism brought an external enemy, which ironically helped to unify nationalities. As is true in any social scene, technological development was at different levels in different parts of Africa when colonialism rudely interrupted the natural progression and development.

Moreover, in their scramble for territories in Africa, European colonial powers arbitrarily carved up vast chunks of land among themselves. They imposed the current national boundaries on Africa. Without these disruptive divisions with artificial boundaries, it is possible that Africa could have evolved as one united nation. But capitalism and imperialism could never accept any form of unity among people it seeks to exploit. The states that emerged through this process often bore little relation to nationality, linguistic, historical, geographical and cultural boundaries of the people. Thus, not only do many states comprise of more than one nationality as in Kenya, but also many nationalities are divided between different states (such as the Maasai nationality in Kenya and Tanzania, and the Somali nationality in Kenya and Somalia).

Nationalities today can be a tremendous force for change. They can be a major unifying force if allowed to develop without interference - or can be a divisive one if dictators like Moi have their way. Given the colonial past and the current attacks on nationalities in Africa, the question of unity and division has become one of immense significance.

Mwakenya's position on nationalities has been set out in its various documents such as the "Draft Minimum Programme"(1987), "Kenya; Democracy Plank"(1991) as well as in its various internal and external documents.

Culture and Class

A nationality has common culture, as we saw earlier. But a common culture does not imply a *uniform* culture. In all nationalities there are variations in culture depending on such things as class, region, or religion. It is also the case that where oppressed nations resist, their sense of national consciousness, which binds them together, is strengthened. Imperialism maintains its domination directly or indirectly through the use of finance and industrial capital using local agents. Amílcar Cabral described the process of neo-colonialism:

In the case of neo-colonialism, whether the majority of colonised population is of native or foreign origin, the imperialist action takes place through the form of creating a local bourgeoisie or pseudo-bourgeoisie, controlled by the ruling class of the dominant country (“The Weapon of Theory”).

Colonialism was not satisfied with this attack on African people at the cultural level. They realised that what really mattered in social life was the economic factors. They used the leaders in each nationality to carry not only the message of the bible and narrow national chauvinism, but also material bribes. In many cases, existing leaders, who had represented the interest of each nationality, were subverted to become the new petty-bourgeoisie carrying high the message of their colonial masters. Although many leaders defied this new onslaught and gave their lives, colonialism succeeded in enticing enough *nyaparas* (comprador bourgeoisie) from among the new elite. The real breakthrough for colonialism was made with the use of colonial educational system which trained a new generation of the comprador petty bourgeoisie which was subservient to foreign interests. Thus while there is unity of different nationalities, there is also conflict and intense contradiction *within* a nationality along class lines. These are the dynamics of social reality.

Moi thus represents the unity of comprador classes from all nationalities in Kenya. Those who oppose him must understand this reality and not fall into the false premise that it is one nationality - the Kalenjin - who are oppressing other nationalities. Our resistance should similarly take into account the class basis of resistance, not only the nationality aspect of it. The unity within a nationality does not put an end to the class contradictions and class struggle within a nationality. Thus, for example, it is not the Kikuyu or the Kalenjin working class that benefit when Kenyatta or Moi are in power. It is only

the comprador elements in each nationality that grew in wealth at different historical periods. The “official” opposition in Kenya today represents the interest of the petty bourgeoisie from different nationalities and not the class interest of the working people.

Our solution to the oppression of nationality is the abolition of the oppressive system which allows one section of the community to be exploited in the interest of another. Our victory will be symbolised by the disappearance of antagonisms within and between nationalities and the growth of friendship among peoples, the continual economic and cultural drawing together of all nationalities, their mutual enrichment and the establishment of traditions of free and equal growth and development of all people of all nationalities. Our goal is the economic as well as social and political equality between different nationalities. Without such equality, there will continue to be conflict among nationalities which will be exploited by external and internal forces seeking to maintain their own privileges. This is the lesson to be learnt from the oppression of the Somali nationality in the early years of independence and the recent conflicts between nationalities instigated by Kanu. Rather than having a unifying policy on the question of nationalities, Kanu seeks to exaggerate nationality differences in order to prevent the formation of a united opposition to its rule.

The leaders who came to power in many African countries at independence were not from the ranks of those who organised and sacrificed during the anti-colonial struggle. Thus it was not Kimaathi and Mau Mau who came to power in Kenya but Kenyatta and KANU. It is the comprador-bourgeoisie, called pseudo-bourgeoisie by Cabral (also called “black skins, white masks” by Fanon or “coconuts” by others; they are often called *nyapara* in Kenya) - it is the comprador bourgeoisie who came to power as a result of manoeuvring by the departing colonial rulers. It is no coincidence that Moi is a product of the old colonial educational system and had been groomed for years before he grabbed power.

What the colonial rulers learned about dividing people has been passed on to the comprador leaders of today. It is thus the Moi's of the world who are busy exploiting the “tribal divisions” in order to remain in power. But they are at the old colonial game with a vengeance. They are not satisfied with exploiting superficial differences between nationalities for their own purposes: they actually take up arms against nationalities that they feel do

not support them. This, however, is not done openly through the use of armed forces. KANU, for instance, trains, arms and supports its own private army which is not under national control although paid from national wealth. Thus Moi can keep a straight face and deny involvement of the Kanu government when international bodies question his involvement in massacres of thousands of people. It is his private army that does the killing and officially the private army does not exist. It suits Moi and some international bodies to play so blatantly with truth.

This tactic of using private armies to attack nationalities was used by Buthelezi in South Africa in the past and is being used in Nigeria today. But one of the primary proponents of this genocide war against nationalities today is Moi. So clever has he become at it that Banda turned to be taught how to “win” an election using a mercenary army trained to fight a “tribal war”. But Banda did not match Moi’s cunning in dividing opposition.

Nationality Antagonism is an Aspect of Capitalist Development

Yet the division of a people into different nationalities is not in itself a divisive force. The existence of nationalities allows the growth of a rich diversity of languages, cultures, ideas and particularities of development that respond to local needs. The unity of the various nationalities gives an added richness to national - i.e. Kenyan - cultural and social life. It is only dictators like Moi who turn such wealth into divisive politics for their own narrow interest of remaining in power. There is no “natural” force that makes nationalities fight each other. It is the Moises who exploit minor differences to turn them into major antagonistic wars. The damage thus done can bring ruin and civil war to a country. It is therefore extremely important that we understand the *theoretical* aspects of the question of nationalities. Only from such a clearer understanding can a strong force emerge to oppose Moi’s divisive politics.

Antagonisms between nationalities are an aspect of capitalism which seeks a uniformity between peoples and nations. The commercial and economic interests of capitalism are maximised under such uniformity, as it makes exploitation of people and resources and the selling of commodities between nations easier. Thus nationalities are directly and indirectly under attack as they make capitalist exploitation difficult by bringing in diversity and their own particular cultures. Capitalism seeks standardisation in lives of people

around the world. Thus for example, genetic diversity is under attack in favour of the “green revolution” seeds marketed by the transnationals; the existence of many international and nationality languages are similarly being sacrificed so that English can become the “world” language. The uniformity of commodity production - perhaps best represented by the spread of Coca Cola around the world - is in ascendancy. It makes the rapid exploitation of cheap labour and the selling of commodities around the world that much easier.

An Alternative Vision

What is the alternative vision of development if nationalities are to flourish and become a force for creativity in our society? Some experiences under socialism in the USSR, People’s Republic of China, Cuba etc shows what can be possible given a positive approach towards nationalities. China, for example, has over 55 nationalities. About 6.7% of China’s population numbering about 67 million people (1984 figures) comes from minority nationalities, and they inhabit over half of China’s total area. Since 1949 the government has maintained a policy of equality for all nationalities, large or small. Wherever minority nationalities live in sufficiently compact communities, they can possess autonomy. The state tries to support the economy, politics, culture, education and health of the minority nationalities. The government has supported the growth and development of minority nationality culture, language, folk art and crafts. Even the policies of controlling the population of the majority Han nationality are not applied to minority nationalities, as the state feels those minority nationality populations and their culture and way of life needs protection.

Thus conflict and wars are not the inevitable outcome of different nationalities living in the same country. It is only capitalism that turns nationality relations into antagonistic ones, using agents such as Moi.

The different nationalities making up a country are like a many-faceted diamond. Each aspect is complete and beautiful in itself, but the true beauty and value of the diamond emerges only when seen in the unity of its various aspects. The total value of the diamond far exceeds the individual values of each of its aspects. It is the wealth of our nationalities which gives added wealth to the people of our country as a whole. Let us not allow a dictator like Moi to spoil the wealth of our country found in the presence of our diverse nationalities.

Conclusion

The question of nationalities is becoming an important question not only in Kenya, but in Africa and in Europe as well. With the changes associated with the fall of Soviet Union, the theoretical and practical advances made in the handling the question of nationalities are being reversed. It was the policy of socialist nations to aim towards the equality of nationalities as an aspect of the overall unity of the working people and of the state.

The post USSR world has lost the positive attitude towards nationalities. Petty dictators such as Moi use nationality differences to create disunity between nationalities as a way of ensuring their stay in power. The experience of Congo (now Zaire) in the 1960 showed that imperialism was not averse to using nationality divisions to create instability in states which has progressive policies. Here imperialism sought to overthrow Lumumba and his progressive, anti-imperialist policies.

The experiences in Somalia, Rwanda, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Angola show that regressive forces create instability by encouraging divisions along nationality lines. Idi Amin used the expulsion of one minority nationality - Asians - to gain temporary popularity, but the long-term effects on Uganda was the growth of inter-nationality rivalry.

History teaches us that if the differences between nationalities are allowed to degenerate into social, political, and economic inequalities, people's dissatisfactions are diverted by demagogues into inter-nationality wars, sometimes leading to collapse of the state into chaos. In this environment, the real causes of inequalities in our societies are forgotten, as people are encouraged to fight imagined "enemies" from other nationalities.

It is only by ensuring equality in every field for all nationalities that we can ensure that nationalities can live peacefully within postcolonial states. The long-term solution perhaps lies in a Pan-African state in which different nationalities can live in peace with other nationalities, with the cultural and economic well being of each nationality guaranteed in theory (through a constitution) and in practice as well.

Juma Abbas

Capitalism and Socialism: Has the Contradiction been Resolved?

Reproduced from: *Mpatanishi*

Vol. 2 No.1 Sept. 1992, pp.11-12

Matukio Duniani

The following article has been taken from material supplied by UKenya, written by Shiraz Durrani.

Recent events in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union have been hailed by bourgeois propagandists as victory for capitalism and the death of socialism. Many progressive people and indeed some activists have been confused by these events and their interpretation by the capitalist press. It is necessary for us to start a discussion on the events and also on their implications for us in Kenya.

First of all It is important to read what progressive people and parties have been saying about recent developments. It would be instructive, for example, to hear what Cuba and China are saying about recent events. The South African Communist Party has also begun a debate on this. Some articles on this are listed at the end of this section and should be read by all.

It is Important to admit that changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have adversely affected the forces of socialism in the world. Their very existence had provided a rallying point for socialism, and in many cases had provided not only moral but material support for liberation movements and to anti-imperialist forces everywhere. Their change of policy has left imperialist forces led by the U.S. with a free hand to interfere in affairs of any country without being challenged. The recent attack on Iraq testifies to this.

But this does not mean that capitalism has triumphed. The achievements of socialist experiences have been many and will live for ever. But even socialism in these countries was of a particular type influenced by their own particularities. The conversion to capitalism will not in itself solve the problems facing the people. Already questions are being raised about

production for profit which disregards the satisfaction of people's basic needs. As time goes on more contradictions will arise.

More fundamentally, it is true that these changes, however important they may have been, have not resolved the basic contradiction between capitalism and socialism. Classes have not been abolished, class struggle has not ceased. MoIs and KANUs still exist and are still in power. Their major backer, U.S-led imperialism still exists, more powerful and more ruthless than ever before. Social oppression has not vanished; economic exploitation still deprives our people the fruits of their labour. Children still die in their thousands through malnutrition and their parents are even today massacred and shot by forces of oppression that is the hallmark of capitalism.

If capitalism is flourishing, if exploitation is still rampant, can socialism be dead? Ever since the formation of classes, class struggle has never ceased. And there can only be one resolution to class conflict - socialism. Historically, the struggle against imperialism has been waged throughout the world, but different countries and different nationalities within a country have taken the lead at different times. It was the Paris Commune in France that led the struggle in one historical period, the Bolshevik revolution at another, and the Chinese revolution in yet another period. At other times, people of Cuba and Vietnam have taken the lead. At another level, the anti-colonial struggles in Algeria, Kenya, and Ghana have played their part in nibbling at the feet of the imperialist giant-dwarf. The struggle of the South African people even today plays its part in the overall struggle against imperialism in its local manifestation. Similarly our own struggle testifies to the on-going struggle against neo-colonialism.

Do these struggles imply that imperialism has won, that socialism has been defeated, that the people's search for a democratic solution to their problems has been abandoned? On the contrary. They imply a further sharpening of the basic contradictions.

The only certainty for the future is that the anti-imperialist struggles will continue. They may be more difficult, having been deprived of the material and moral support that came from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. More self-reliant forms of struggle will have to be evolved. More cooperation among struggling people will have to be resorted to. This may delay final victory, but a stronger foundation for long-term success will have been laid

in the process. In the short term, some people may be disillusioned. This merely implies that more ideological work among the people and even among cadres is needed. On our part it calls for more study to understand the current forces for and against progress.

The experience from Europe and in Africa has placed the people's power back where it belongs - with the people. No amount of propaganda can alter this basic fact that people's power belongs to the people and they are not about to hand it over to imperialism to continue their exploitation.

So let us sing even louder our songs for total liberation and stand firm against everything that imperialism represents. Tomorrow truly belongs to the people - and to us if we march with them.

Suggested Readings

Slovo, Joe: "Has Socialism Failed?" *Umsebenzi* Discussion Pamphlet. South African Communist Party pamphlet. 1990. 28 pp. [Also published in *The African Communist*, No.121, pp. 25-52 (1990) . Subsequent letters in *the African Communist* continue the debate).

Castro, Fidel: They gave their lives for the most treasured values of the revolution. Dec. 7, 1989. Reproduced In *The African Communist* No. 121, pp 52-63 (1990).

Marrero, Juan: Nicaragua - Big setback that leads to new stage of Struggle. *Granma*. March 11, 1990. Reproduced in *The African Communist*, No. 122, pp. 93-96 (1990).

...Freedom and democracy do not exist in the abstract, only in the concrete. In a society rent by class struggle, if there is freedom for the exploiting classes to exploit the working people, there is no freedom for the working people not to be exploited, and if there is democracy for the bourgeoisie, there is no democracy for the proletariat and other working people... Those who demand freedom and democracy in the abstract regard democracy as an end and not a means. Democracy sometimes seems to be an end, but it is in fact only a means. - Mao Zedong

PART 3:¹⁶ A PORTRAIT OF RESISTANCE: KARIMI NDUTHU. 1961 - 1996¹⁷

Revolutionaries like Karimi Nduthu never die as their spirit keeps inspiring all those seeking and fighting for social and economic justice for humanity. Karimi's devotion and sacrifice in quest of equality and equity in Kenya continues to motivate all those struggling against neo-colonialism. Karimi Nduthu was assassinated at a young age of 35 years by agents of the regime of President Daniel Moi on March 24, 1996. Like other revolutionaries who followed the same path, he will be remembered and celebrated for many years. Annual commemorations of Karimi's death have been held since his assassination and this year was no exception as friends, sympathisers, colleagues and family gathered at the Professional Centre on March 24, 2018 to celebrate his revolutionary work. Those who could not attend sent solidarity messages.

This section of the book contains solidarity messages which were read at the event. The authors who had, an opportunity to work with Karimi expresses their love and respect for this patriot and show the huge impact that Karimi has had on their lives.

PATRIOT AND REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRAT

Karimi Nduthu, was born in 1961 to his parents Nduthu wa Mathaai and Wambui wa Nduthu at Karinga in Molo Division in Nakuru District (County). He sat for East African Certificate of Education (EACE) in 1979 and joined Kapsabet Boys High School in Nandi District where he sat for his Advanced Certificate of Education in 1981.

Karimi took up temporary teaching jobs in Molo Township and Njabini Girls Secondary School in 1982 and 1983 respectively. During the time he was teaching, he developed a close relationship with his students. The students loved him for his caring spirit while his fellow teachers respected him because of his dedication.

16 This section comprises of solidarity messages which were read during the commemoration of revolutionary works of Karimi Nduthu in 2018

17 This article is compiled from "Karimi Nduthu: A Life in the Struggle" by Kimani Waweru

His movement in the different parts of the country brought him face to face with living conditions of the ordinary Kenyans. He was struck with one fact: that the living conditions of the working people in general, and the rural peasant in particular were basically the same no matter the part of the country they came from. He also noted that the wealthy and well-to-do, whatever their ethnic and regional origins, behaved the same towards the poor.



Karimi in the middle

Karimi was enrolled in the Mechanical Department of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Nairobi in September 1983 and immediately involved himself in students' politics. For him, engineering was part of social life and he never took the reactionary position that sciences had nothing to do with politics and cultures. The University authorities under the tutelage of dictatorial and oppressive regime expelled him from the highest seat of learning in February 1985 because of his revolutionary activities. He refused to be a "good boy" while the country sank lower into tyranny in the hands of enemies of the people. It was during this period that he came across underground literature of December Twelve Movement and due to their ideological clarity, Karimi joined the party, the party was later to change to Mwakenya December Twelve Movement (MKDTM) so as to reflect correctly the history, continuity and the mainstreams that have gone into making it.

Karimi proved to be one of the most active cadres in the party, always ready to give his body and mind to a cause he saw will liberate Kenya. It was while he was on a Mwakenya mission that he was arrested in July 1986. He was charged

with sabotage activities against the dictatorship and he and his comrades Tirop Kitur and Kangethe Mungai, were arraigned in a Kangaroo Court in Nakuru. On July 4th 1986, Karimi was sentenced to fourteen years in prison with hard labour. Even as he went to prison he never asked for mercy, it was with his head raised high and fingers raised in symbol of an ultimate victory for the people in fighting for their country: *"I believe in fighting for my country. I find nothing criminal in criticising the government...change, like death is inevitable"*.



Karimi third from left

On June 22nd, 1992 Karimi was released after serving six years of his term. This resulted from a campaign waged by the mothers of political prisoners and members of Release Political Prisoners (RPP). He involved himself with activities of RPP and was elected its Secretary General in November 1992. Karimi was very active in fighting for the release of other political prisoners and fighting for democracy and good governance.

In all his work he was guided by Mwakenya party's ideology which he always saw as bigger than any individual office bearer. Karimi, being a National Coordinator of Mwakenya December Twelve Movement, remained faithful to the ideals of the party. He read progressive literature in an effort to quench his thirst for knowledge to guide the party in attainment of its goal of seeing a democratic and just society in which the wealth of our land and industry would go to enhance the lives of all working people of Kenya.



Karimi extreme left with his comrades

His unwavering commitment to the just cause saw the enemy of the working people send their agents to his residence in Riruta Satellite, a suburb of Nairobi where they brutally murdered him. The said agents, upon finishing their mission, left only to be followed by the police who were only interested with his research documents, his cassettes recorder and valuable tapes of interviews with women Mau Mau fighters – a research project that Karimi was involved in - which they took with them. The enemies of the people were able to eliminate Karimi physically but they could not kill the cause to which he dedicated his life.

Karimi was a revolutionary jewel, in him firmly embedded the purest forms of the Kenyan tradition of patriotic resistance. His name symbolises resistance against oppression and exploitation. He will never die if we emulate him. He will never die if we are willing to pick up his revolutionary banner and march forward in unity. If we emulate his profound example the cause for which he died will never be defeated.

Karimi's Quotes

“The government has used oppressive laws to ensure that those campaigning for a just social order are perpetually in prison. We believe that the problem

can only be solved through concerted efforts on the part of those fighting for social justice. We must dismantle those institutions that engender oppression...” (Karimi Nduthu, February 1995).

“We would like to remind KANU that Kenyans are not babies. We know what is good for our country. Its paternalistic approach to constitutional change is, to say the least, obnoxious. It is also contradictory of a regime that boasts of popular support to show such lack of faith in the people.” (Karimi Nduthu in a press statement on 3rd June 1995).

“Tactics of terrorism are foredoomed to fail. No amount of intimidation, terror etc will stifle Kenyans’ legitimate struggle for democracy and social justice. You cannot stem the quest for freedom and justice by terror. The quest for freedom and justice can only be stemmed by fulfilling people’s legitimate demands. (Karimi Nduthu 16th March 1995).

“We have to study, analyse and understand the role of NGOs in our country. It is a fact that they are imperialist agencies whose agenda is to sabotage and derail the national democratic revolution. They are enemies from within.” (Karimi Nduthu 15th September 1995)

“A scientific and historical study of our society would help us to combat the politic of tribalism and narrow nationalism imposed on our people by the comprador bourgeois rulers and their imperialist backers” (Karimi Nduthu 15th September 1995)

Excerpt from Karimi’s letter sent to Maina Kinyatti on 7th March 1996

“Recently, the secret police have been following me. I think they want to harass me to weaken my resolve. It is certainly psychological warfare. I suspect the regime has never forgiven me for my Mwakenya MK membership. They know that I have always stood firmly behind the party’s agenda for national democratic revolution and the creation of a new Kenya. But these recent acts may have been triggered by our work in RPP. The regime does not like RPP because it is above ground organisation with clear agenda, a clear focus, and a courageous membership that is always ready to confront the regime over human and democratic rights! The feeling is that we have been very effective in continuing to focus national and international pressure on the human rights

abuses in this country. And so far the regime has failed to 'buy' our members. They can follow me as much as they want, but they underestimate me if they think that they can intimidate me and force me to abandon the struggle for democracy and social justice. But let this not worry you. I can handle it."

KARIMI NDUTHU: REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF A KENYAN HERO

Today, we remember Karimi Nduthu on the 22nd anniversary of his brutal murder by people all evidence points to have been state agents during the rule of dictator Daniel Arap Moi. For me, Karim's death was an act of terror meant to send a warning to anyone opposed to the regime of the day, I would say it worked to a certain measure as all terrorist acts do. I was shocked and terrified. I never imagined anybody would regard Karimi a threat to a point of taking away his life and to do so in a manner that never bothered much to conceal the perpetrator.

When the killing of Karimi happened we, his close associates, attempted and hoped to succeed in unravelling the mystery of the assassination, starting with organizing the postmortem with the help of a Danish forensic medical expert, followed by a judicial inquiry. But the efforts bore no fruits as has happened with all other assassinations committed by suspected state agents in Kenya. The judge who presided over the inquiry faulted the police for conducting poor investigations and said, among other things, that the role played by Njoki, (a young lady friend of Karimi known to us, found in his house on the fateful night) should have been a subject of further investigations.

Having drawn a blank in attempts to find out exactly who killed Karimi and why, we were left to draw our own conclusions based on circumstantial evidence and from what we knew of Karimi's *modus operandi*. What is presented here is one such interpretation from somebody who was an age mate, friend and comrade to Karimi for a decade and a half. I have written this tribute because I think the kind of person Karimi was, what he stood for and what happened to him, all offer valuable lessons to all involved in the struggle for the betterment of society. This is just like knowing the life of Ernesto Che Guevara. And the parallel is, not surprisingly, very strong.

I believe that the killing of Karimi was the culmination of a collection of intelligence by state agents that began in the early 80s when Karimi got involved in radical student politics at the University of Nairobi where he was studying mechanical engineering. As the years went by, they must have followed Karimi home after he was expelled from the University. The state must have planted agents wherever Karimi frequented. I remember a man who was always perched

on the fence opposite the gate to Kipsigis Girls High School in Kericho where we often went to visit our comrades Oduor Ongwen and Ondenda Lumumba who were teaching there in 1986. They followed him in the police cells when they arrested him in Gilgil, in an interrogation by the then Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner Hezekiah Oyugi, in the courtroom, into prison for six years and after prison. Upon arrest, why would Special Branch agents have singled him out from the three of us for a vicious beating at Nakuru Police Station? In prison at Naivasha, an officer told him this: “Karimi, we are going to break that spirit which you think you have.”

Since intelligence was picking what I was learning from Karimi as I interacted with him, I try to imagine that what they found about him that ultimately convinced them that he posed a mortal threat to the *status quo* and had to be extra-judicially executed, were the very same virtues that drew us to him.

Karimi Nduthu’s life was defined by relevance. He responded without hesitation to the suffering and the cries of the people of Kenya who fell victim to the *Kimendero* (killer) regime of the day. He did it at the university, inside prison and in his home in the then Rift Valley Province after politically instigated ethnic violence. What set Karimi many miles ahead of us, his contemporaries, was a combination of many traits rare to find in a single person and that goes to create historical figures who become legends in their own lifetime. In communicating his ideas, Karimi had the fiery eloquence of Malcom X. And yet in dealing with his comrades, he had the unassuming, self-effacing humility of Mahatma Gandhi. This, while his heart throbbed with the intrepid, dogged and incorruptible determination of Nelson Mandela and Dedan Kimathi.

With the above traits, Karimi set out to help attain a Kenya, an Africa and a world of his dreams. For his motherland he set out with absolute faith and ready to sacrifice whatever it took to help create a just and equitable society without political jailings and without JM Kariuki’s ten million beggars and ten millionaires. Aided on by his superior intellect and fine social skills, with an ability to capture the attention of any gathering, Karimi was manifestly headed for the political podium. What, I believe was clear to the regime of the day was that Karimi would draw gradual nationwide following once he hit the political podium and become the beacon of hope to the downtrodden, with unpredictable consequences. The explosive political forces the arrival of a person like Karimi on the political stage could unleash was not something the Kenyan establishment was prepared to wait and see. He had to die, and die early before he was too well known for them to handle the backlash safely.

Unfortunately for us who loved him, Karimi, like all humans great and small, had his own foibles and even debilitating weaknesses for a person who set out to do the kind of risky work he did. One of these was being excessively protective of details on his private life and human feelings, the stuff that age mates and old friends freely confide in each other. He, for instance, politely but firmly refused to discuss with us the affair we knew he was having with Njoki, who would ultimately be found in his house on the night he was murdered. Did the police know about this weakness and set out to exploit it? She being equally secretive, we will never know who she truly was and precisely what she was doing in the house on that fateful night. To me, there is a strong possibility that she was a plant by the secret police.

Another weakness of Karimi was a belief that he could tackle extremely difficult tasks all on his own. While in prison, he started a hunger strike against our hard labor without the knowledge of Tirop or I. This was in spite of the fact that we all worked together every day in the prison yard and would not have thought twice about a hunger strike. In fact, we had done hunger strikes before by refusing something they called a penal diet. As they secretly followed and closely studied him everywhere, could intelligence also have noted this David-fighting-Goliath weakness in Karimi and set out to exploit it?

After observing the above facts about who Karimi was and then seeing what happened to him, I have pondered over them for many years and drew further inference as to who really Karimi was. My simple conclusion was this: Karimi was a profoundly gifted and talented person whose genius would have immensely benefited Kenya and the world, had it been nurtured and not fatally suppressed. Karimi posed no danger to anybody, except those who posed a mortal danger to the advancement of our nation and humankind in general. But even to these, there was nothing to fear in Karimi to an extent of murdering him because there was a Che Guevara and a Nelson Mandela in Karimi all rolled up into one. This is because it did not matter how strongly Karimi was opposed to your ideas, he had an ear for everybody and always preferred to do more listening than talking. In the six years we spent together in prison, Karimi would ask Tirop and I questions without end on a range of subjects as wide as the universe itself and sit there listening while picking out clever comments that drew out the humor. Karimi's humour and capacity for caricature helped sustain us in the dreary interior of Moi's torture dungeons.

Karimi could extract humor out of almost any situation. He was also insatiable in seeking out for a wholesome understanding of life and all phenomena around

him. He then exhibited over-excitability, where he knew no halfway measures when it came to feelings on what ought to be and his role in influencing change. And as we all know, he was sensitive on issues of justice to a fault and as a leader, he was confident in his abilities, in the ideas he held dear and went out to convince others about. In his work he was a stickler for details and accuracy. He had a photographic memory. Pedagogic scientists tell us that these are characteristics of extreme intelligence.

Karimi occupies a rightful place in the roll of honor among Kenyan heroes and heroines because he deliberately chose to apply this superior intellect he was born with for the betterment of society. This is why we celebrate his life today.

In thinking about who Karimi was and what happened to him, I urge that we see him beyond the political contest playing out in the days when he lived and did his good work for which he paid the ultimate price. I would urge we first see him as a great national human resource wantonly wasted and destroyed by primitive, shortsighted, unpatriotic people only out to protect their short-term interests, like a mother who throws out her baby in the night for disturbing her sleep with its cries. Karimi was the future Paul Kagame who would have helped make Kenya better for the ultimate benefit of all. If his murder was to be linked to local Rift Valley issues, it was an even bigger blunder because Karimi's outstanding talents would have made great contribution locally, benefitting all, with the advent of devolution.

After seeing Karimi as that very rare national leadership talent that was lost forever in a nation in dire need of the the same, we then must ask ourselves what we should have done that we did not do and what more we can do to identify, protect and nurture to fruition the few in a lifetime more Karimis that have and will be born in our midst.

And as we do this, we must ask and be ready to answer the hard questions. Did we, for instance, for those of us who had the responsibility in his days, inadvertently put Karimi in harm's way, or is it that we operated during times that were just too difficult and dangerous? Karimi himself had very little exposure to the world and how struggles for the social justice he was so committed to are waged. He and his young comrades knew little of life beyond their sleepy villages, shopping centers and the local schools they attended. So they were bound to make many obvious mistakes and they did not disappoint in this as they embarked on a program of sabotage of government facilities and started looking for arms to wage a guerilla war in the Cuban Revolution style.

A pointer to the fact that older, more experienced comrades cared about Karimi and his small daredevil cell of three operating underground in the Rift valley is that a comrade was sent to urgently fetch them in Gilgil on the same day in July 1986 that they were arrested. He carried the money under instruction to whisk them into exile. It was deemed now suicidal to wage any more struggle within Kenyan soil. But without mobile phones, our one-room hideout at Campi Somalia in Gilgil became a house too far. Police were virtually everywhere, forcing houses open and checking residents. He returned to Nairobi aboard a charcoal lorry, it being too risky to use a matatu, and onwards with others to exile in Tanzania.

Unfortunately, no amount of pleading has succeeded to convince this comrade to let me disclose his name here. All I can say is that he was and still is a lawyer practicing in Nairobi.

It is open only to conjecture what would have happened if our comrade had arrived in Gilgil a day before and succeeded in taking Karimi to exile. It is probably an event that would have changed Kenya's history in profound ways.

In the meantime, we thank Mama and Baba Karimi and the rest of the family for giving us such a jewel. We are with you in feeling that void that nothing can ever fill.

May Karimi's spirit, his good deeds as well as events around his illustrious life inspire us to apply all energies and intellect to help create a Kenya and a world that our children and generations after can forever be proud of.

Thank you.

Abdilatif Abdalla

UJUMBE KWA MAADHIMISHO YA KUMKUMBUKA SHUJAA KARIMI NDUTHU

Ndugu zangu na wanaharakati wenzangu.

Ni fahari kubwa kwangu kushirikishwa katika maadhimisho haya ya kumkumbuka Karimi Nduthu, mmojawapo miongoni mwa mashujaa wetu wa Kenya waliojitolea maisha yao ili kuendeleza harakati za mapambano ya kuleta mabadiliko ya kweli kwa sehemu kubwa ya Wakenya – hasa wale walioko katika matabaka ya chini. Shujaa ambaye bado naendelea kumheshimu.

Ninavyoamini ni kwamba tumejumuika hivi leo ili kuadhimisha na kusherehekea maisha ya mzalendo huyu; wala si kuadhimisha kifo chake. Kwa sababu Karimi hakufa. Dhati yake bado inaendelea kuishi. Kama dhati yake ingekuwa imekufa, tusingekuwa tunaendelea kumtaja na kumkumbuka. Na kwa kuwakumbuka mashujaa wetu kama yeye huwa ndiyo tunaipa uhai historia yetu ya mapambano dhidi ya dhuluma za kila aina; na pia tunaendeleza mbele ule moyo wa kizalendo wa kujitolea nafsi zetu kwa ajili ya nchi yetu.

Nashukuru kwamba nilikuwa ni miongoni mwa Wakenya waliopata bahati ya kufanya kazi na mzalendo Karimi Nduthu wakati wa kile kipindi kigumu cha historia ya Kenya, ambapo nchi yetu ilikuwa imetandwa na giza la ukandamizaji uliokuwa ukifanywa na serikali dhalimu iliyokuwa ikiongozwa na Daniel arap Moi na KANU.

Nakumbuka kukutana naye Karimi kwa mara ya kwanza mwaka 1994, mjini Nairobi.

Mwaka huo wa 1994 ilikuwa ni mara yangu ya kwanza kurudi nchini Kenya baada ya kulazimika kuishi uhamishoni (mwanzo Tanzania na baadaye Uingereza) kwa miaka 22 – baada ya kufunguliwa gerezani mwaka 1972. Mwaka 1994 Karimi alishakuwa Mratibu wa Kitaifa wa MWAKENYA. Mwaka huo nilifika Nairobi kutoka London nilikokuwa nikiishi, na ambako nilikuwa nikishirikiana na Wakenya wenzangu katika harakati dhidi ya serikali ya Moi-KANU. Nilikuwa nimetumwa na chama chetu hicho cha MWAKENYA kuja kukutana na kushauriana na Karimi pamoja na mzalendo mwenzake, Tirop arap Kitur, kuhusu mipango ya mikakati ya kuendeleza harakati zetu ndani ya nchi. (Ni matumaini yangu kwamba Tirop naye yuko hapo ukumbini kwenye

maadhimisho haya). Kutokana na hali mbaya ya ukandamizaji iliyokuwako nchini wakati huo, ilibidi sisi watatu tukutane kwenye msitu wa Ngong ili tuweze kuzungumza bila ya kuhofia kwamba tunasikilizwa na serikali. Siku chache baadaye Karimi akanialika kwake, Riruta Satellite, alikuwa anaishi. Lakini hapo nyumbani kwake hatukuzungumza jambo lolote la kisiasa. Baada ya hapo, tulikutana tena nje ya Kenya, pamoja na wanaharakati wenzetu kutoka ndani na nje ya Kenya, ili kufanya shughuli za MWAKENYA.

Kwa hivyo, nilifanya kazi naye Karimi kwa jumla ya miaka miwili tu, kabla ya kuuliwa. Lakini katika muda huo mfupi niliobahatika kufanya kazi naye, niligundua kwamba Karimi alikuwa na vitu vine, au sifa nne, ambazo ni muhimu sana kwa kila mwanaharakati wa kisiasa kuwa nazo:

Sifa ya kwanza ni kwamba Karimi alikuwa akiipenda nchi yake bila ya kiasi! Lau kama mtu angekifunua kifua chake, angeuona moyo wake umetandwa na umbo la Kenya.

Sifa ya pili aliyokuwa nayo ni kujitolea kwake mhanga ili kuitumikia nchi yake kwa moyo wake wote - bila ya kuchoka wala kunung'unika. Hakuna kazi ambayo aliiona kuwa ni nzito au ni ngumu, au ni chini ya hadhi yake kuitekeleza.

Sifa ya tatu aliyokuwa nayo ilikuwa ni unyenyekevu na kutopenda makuu. Kwa wale waliowahi kufanya naye kazi, watakubaliana nami nisemapo kwamba licha ya nyadhifa na vyeo alivyokuwa navyo katika shughuli mbalimbali za harakati, Karimi hakuwa ni mtu wa majivuno na mbwembwe.

Sifa ya nne – ambayo ndiyo muhimu zaidi na ndio msingi mkuu wa harakati – ni imani thabiti aliyokuwa nayo kuhusu aliyokuwa akiyatenda. Hata mara moja hakuteteleka (hakutetereka) au kuyumbayumba. Alikuwa ni mwamba madhubuti usioweza kutingishika! Na hakukata tamaa!

Huyo ndiye Karimi Nduthu, mwanaharakati, mzalendo na shujaa, ambaye serikali ya Moi-KANU ilitishika naye. Huyo ndiye Karimi Nduthu ambaye usiku wa tarehe 23 Machi, mwaka 1996, serikali hiyo dhalimu ilifikiri kwamba kwa kumuua itaifuta kumbukumbu yake. Lakini kumbukumbu za mashujaa hazifutiki! Kwa sababu kumbukumbu hizo huwa zimegubikwa ndani kabisa ya nyoyo za wale wanaoendelea kuishi, na ambao wanaijua thamani ya wazalendo wao; wale ambao wanapokezana kumbukumbu hizo kwa kizazi hadi kizazi; wale ambao kamwe hawausahau – wala kamwe hawatausahau – mchango wa mashujaa kama Karimi Nduthu, Dedan Kimaathi, Pio Gama Pinto, Bildad

Kaggia, JM Kariuki, na wengineo wengi, katika kuifanya Kenya kuwa ni nchi ya usawa na uadilifu kwa kila Mkenya.

Ni matumaini yangu kwamba wanaharakati watajifunza na kuyapatia faida maisha ya Karimi Nduthu; na kwamba yatawahamasisha na kuwaongoza katika utendaji kazi wao. Hiyo ni miongoni mwa heshima kubwa tunayoweza kumpa Karimi Nduthu.

Nilitangulia kusema kwamba tumekusanyika hivi leo ili kuadhimisha na kusherehekea maisha ya mzalendo huyu; wala si kuadhimisha kifo chake. Kwa sababu dhiti ya Karimi haikufa. Kwani shujaa aliyemo katika mapambano ya kupigania haki na kuleta mabadiliko katika jamii, ili jamii hiyo iweze kuishi maisha ya kibinadamu yaliyo huru na yenye heshima, huwa hafi!

Kama nilivyopata kusema mahali kwengine, kila pumzi moja ya shujaa inayomtoka wakati anapokuwa anakata roho, pumzi hiyo haipotei bure bali huingia katika nafsi za wale waliobakia, na kuwazidishia uhai na nguvu za kuiendeleza mbele kazi hiyo. Kila tone la damu linalomwagika kutoka katika mwili wa mwanaharakati kama huyo, damu hiyo huwa ni maji matukufu na yenye rutuba yanayouimarisha mti wa kupigania haki. Mti ambao una matawi mingi sana. Matawi ambayo hakuna mtu yoyote, au nguvu yoyote ya kilimwengu, inayoweza kuyakata na kuyamaliza. Wala mti huo haufi. Kama ungekuwa unakufa, ungekuwa umeshakufa kitambo sana katika nchi yetu hii baada ya wanaharakati na wapiganiaji haki wengi kuuliwa. Lakini mti huo bado unaendelea kuishi. Na utaendelea kukua. Hautakufa!!

Katika ukurasa wa 26 wa kitabu, *Karimi Nduthu: A Life in the Struggle* kumeandikwa kwamba Karimi alikuwa akipenda kusoma mashairi; na kwamba shairi mojawapo alilokuwa akilisoma mara kwa mara ni shairi langu liitwalo “Siwati”, lililomo katika kitabu changu cha mashairi niliyoyatunga nilipokuwa gerezani baina ya mwaka 1969 na 1972, kiitwacho *Sauti ya Dhiki*. Kwa hivyo, nataka niimalize ujumbe wangu huu kwa kumsomea Karimi shairi hilo, ikiwa ni njia ya kumhakikishia huko aliko kwamba vizazi na vizazi vya Wakenya havitaacha kuendelea na mapambano ya kujikomboa kutokana na mfumo dhalimu unaowakandamiza walio wengi:

Siwati nshishiyelo, siwati; kwani niwate
Siwati ni lilo hilo, ‘talishika kwa vyovyote
Siwati ni mimi nalo, hapano au popote

Hadi kaburini sote, mimi nalo tufukiwe

Siwati ngaadhibiwa, adhabu kila mifano
Siwati ningaambiwa, ‘tapawa kila kinono
Siwati lililo sawa, silibanduwi mkono
Hata ningaumwa meno, mkono siubanduwi!

Siwati si ushindani, mukasema nashindana
Siwati ifahamuni, sababuye waungwana
Siwati ndangu imani, niithaminiyo sana
Na kuiwata naona, itakuwa ni muhali

Siwati nimeradhiwa, kufikwa na kila mawi
Siwati ningaambiwa, niaminiyo hayawi
Siwati kisha nikawaa, kama nzi; hivyo siwi
Thamma nakariri siwi, na Mngu nisaidiya

MAPAMBANO LAZIMA YAENDELEE!!
Ahsanteni sana kwa kunisikiliza.

Abdilatif Abdalla

Hamburg, Ujerumani

24 Machi, 2018

Shiraz Durrani: Why we can't forget Karimi Nduthu

Solidarity greetings to all those attending this important event today – and also to those who could not be present here.

Remembering Karimi also reminds us of our history. The history of Kenya is a history of class struggles between the ruling elite comprador classes which have used state power to further their class interests, and working people resisting the elite rule and power. The history of Kenya before independence was a battle by working people for liberation from colonialism; after independence it became a battle against imperialism and the elite it installed in power.

Kenyan people's resistance has ensured that the ruling classes could not continue in power without active and passive support from imperialism. Even so, they had to use excessive force to "control" people's resistance. Massacres, killings, disappearance, exiling, jailings and detentions were some of the methods the ruling classes have resorted to in order to remain in power. Creating ethnic animosity and ethnic killings were used by some in power to "change the people" when they had no prospect of winning free elections. Encouraging inter-nationality strife – the so called "tribal clashes" – remains a standard weapon in the elite's arsenal.

Killing progressive working class organisations and leaders has become an important way for the ruling elite to render people's resistance ineffective. Leaders such as Pio Gama Pinto were among the early victims of the ruling elite. Leaders at grassroots level with a clear socialist ideology and powerful working class organisations also came under fire from the ruling elite. Prominent among them was Karimi Nduthu who was assassinated by agents of the rulers on March 23, 1996. He joined a long line of revolutionaries whose lives were taken by enemies of the people.

As we commemorate the revolutionary work of Shujaa Karimi, it is important that we understand what his life and assassination means in the class struggle in Kenya today. While it is important to proclaim Karimi as a working class hero and promote his ideas, ideals, example and sacrifice among people, we need to go beyond this. We need to understand the real significance of the assassination of leaders like Pio Gama Pinto and Karimi Nduthu. A number of key lessons need to be learnt and then applied in our everyday lives – if we are sincere about remembering Karimi, Pinto and others victimised by the local agents of imperialism.

The first lesson is that such assassinations are not confined to Kenya alone. It happens in every capitalist country where there is active resistance to the capitalism and imperialism by working people. It happens almost daily in Latin America, in Africa, and Asia. Israel has become an expert in such actions against Palestinian resistance and is actively exporting its murderous “expertise” in this field around the world, including Kenya. Assassination is a weapon of choice when western-style democracy fails to sustain and protect capitalism and imperialism.

It is also important to realise that there are active class struggles going on in every capitalist or capitalist-orientated country in the world. Some events may seem insignificant and unrelated to the larger class struggle in the society. But every event, however small and apparently insignificant, has a class aspect to it. It is the responsibility of those actively seeking liberation to investigate and understand the underlying class aspect of these events. On that basis, it is then possible to work out the real strengths and weakness of the opposing forces in the class struggle and work out revolutionary theories and plan appropriate practices.

Imperialism causes death and poverty among all working people as it is in its very nature to do so. Thus the theft of people’s lands and resources and products of labour are not “mistakes” in planning or oversight. Lack of affordable food, healthcare, housing, education and other necessities of life are again not accidental. These are the intended outcomes of capitalism, which by its very definition needs the people to be divided into classes, into the rich and the poor. Such are the foundations for the process of wealth extraction from people to capitalists. And it gets worse. So intense is the resistance from the people to this unjust and oppressive state of affairs that capitalism and imperialism have to resort to daily killings in order to survive. Thus people, particularly the young, in Mathare and other parts of Nairobi, in North Kenya and Coast, among other places, are daily victims of police violence and brutality. Such actions are not the result of a few rogue policemen but are the essential requirements of the ruling class for its very survival.

The next lesson to learn is that the laws, the police and the military forces that Kenyans pay for for security and national defence are the very forces that are used by the ruling class to suppress and control people’s resistance. It is ironic that we are paying these forces to oppress, beat up and kill us. Real freedom consists of people controlling state apparatus in the interest of people, not to

maim and kill people.

And so to the assassination of Shujaa Karimi Nduthu. He was assassinated not in a random police action or as a victim of thugs. His assassination was a targeted action – very much like that of Pio Gama Pinto - by those who saw the potential for revolutionary change he represented. He was a victim of the ruling class-controlled state run on behalf of rich elites and their imperialist backers. They saw him as a threat to their continuing loot of Kenyan resources and products of labour. Really? A simple man, on his own, threatened the entire ruling class establishment? Most certainly. And such strength is in every one of working people in Kenya if that strength is united with others, if it is organised, if it is guided by a clear socialist ideology and if it is led by leaders like Karimi with principles, integrity and a sense of justice. Karimi represented all these aspects to the highest level.

Karimi Nduthu was an ordinary man, yet with extraordinary strength and power. That is why he had to be killed by imperialism. The lesson for us is not only that we study, learn, organise and act so as to create a society based on principles of equality and justice. It is that we also learn to defend our organisations and our leaders. Make no mistake about it. We are victims of terrorism – perpetuated on us by our own state and state machinery because our state and all it stands for has been captured by our enemies. While we may not have reached the state that was reached in the late 1940s when armed resistance became the only way to challenge colonialism, we certainly need to develop counter-terrorism tactics to protect our organisation, our leaders and our people so that the first right we protect is the right to life.

At the same time, let us note that enemies of the people are clear about who they want to attack and why. Makhan Singh was detained by the colonial administration for a period longer than anyone else in the history of Kenya because he highlighted the class nature of capitalism that colonialism brought and also set up working class organisation – trade unions – to fight the evil aspects of capitalism. Pio Gama Pinto was assassinated because of his support for Mau Mau, for advocating socialism and setting up the Lumumba Institute to train the next generation of activists. J. M. Kariuki was eliminated by the comprador regime for advocating restriction on land holding and because he challenged the notion of a society of 10 millionaires and ten million beggars; Karimi Nduthu was assassinated because of his stand for socialist principles and his actions in ensuring a change from the exploitative capitalist system – and

for documenting and researching violence against people in the elite-run ethnic cleansing programmes.

Let us remember that when leaders like Pio Gama Pinto and Karimi Nduthu are assassinated, it is not only they who are under attack. The immediate targets of the hostile bullets and blows were indeed Pinto and Karimi, but these are surely aimed at us as a class, at our organisations and our at our leaders. No working class person in Kenya today can feel safe in their own beds and their houses for the enemy is out there hunting down anyone they see as a threat to their continued rule of looting and creating chaos for working people. Understanding that threat and taking action to avoid enemy bullets and blows is the primary duty of all.

Linked to the assassinations and marginalising of leaders is the imperialist aim of destroying progressive organisations that are able to win over the support of people with socialist programmes which would ensure equality and justice for working people. That is an old colonial tactic now used by the ruling classes. We recall the destruction of East African Association and the East African Trade Union Congress (EATUC) and Mau Mau, among others, in the earlier period. After independence, it was the radical wing of KANU, then KPU, December Twelve Movements and Mwakenya that were targeted for destruction by the new ruling classes. In almost all the cases, the leaders of the organisations were the first to be eliminated, detained or sidelined as a way of weakening their organisations. The result of these attacks is obvious today: there are few radical, socialist functioning organisations in Kenya and any that have the potential of becoming popular are once again targeted for destruction by the ruling classes. No radical trade unions, in the style of EATUC exist either. It is not that there is no room or prospects for such progressive organisations. It is that the ruling classes, using their laws and armed forces, destroy them.

So in remembering Karimi Nduthu today, let us ensure that there will be no more assassinations of our leaders, our youth and our people. Let us ensure that people's organisations can survive and thrive; let us claim our right to alternate ideas, experiences and practices; let us restore people's right to all that sustains life. Ensuring that will be the best way we can commemorate the life and work of Karimi Nduthu.

Shiraz Durrani
London

Shiraz Durrani: A Night to Remember, a Night to Forget

A creative representation of thoughts of Karimi Nduthu, as recalled from events and conversations with Karimi by Shiraz Durrani. Details about the life and struggles of Karimi Nduthu are available in Karimi Nduthu: A Life in the Struggle (1998). London/New York: Vita Books/Mau Mau Research Centre. ISBN 1-869886-12-7.

Politics of the Bleeding Leg

Have never felt such a long, cold, cruel night. Times were when I wanted the night never to end. The warmth of another body next to your skin, arms and legs intertwined. What warmth, what life, even though ice forms on the leaves outside. It is not the *makaa* in the dying jiko that keeps the body warm. Human warmth, hotter than the heat from the sun. And now, this night. Cold. So cold. Penetrating to the very bone through the twisted ankle. Maybe I could have avoided injuring the ankle if I had not jumped the way I did. But was there really a choice? Better to have a broken leg than be caught by the blood-thirsty hounds going by the name of police. Was there really no time to take a blanket or a *shuka*...

Was it really worth it? The whole sequence of events. Politics and this bleeding leg. What a connection. But it was worth it. Yes. All - I, the comrades in arms, the whole country, all, everybody can really hold their heads high in the air. No longer passive victims of the thugs in ties holding hands of thugs in guns. Derailing railways. . only goods, not passengers. But death is death. Even engine drivers are human. Is it right to cause death? No. So why are hundreds killed by the army, police and the youth wingers. Is it right for them to kill hundreds?

But this is no time for regrets, for reflections. The deed is done. The battle has begun. The hounds are looking for us over the whole country. How are A and E faring? No better than me, I guess. Only hope they did not injure their ankles. Very few things are more painful than broken ankles. Months of planning for the railway job - *gari Ia moshi* - have ended on this cold night under open skies.

The night is getting even longer, even colder. I can't sleep for fear of the dog~ running into me. Have to be alert. When was the last meal we had? Ah, the smell of *uji* - warmth descending the gullet, settling in stomach, spreading

to every corner of body. Listen! What was that? Dogs? The lights on the road never die. Like a river rapidly emptying into the sea. One car after another... Some with white lights, some yellow, and then the dreaded blue flashing ones. Looking for 3 “terrorists”. Why are three unarmed, hungry, cold, almost naked bodies so dangerous that whole police stations have emptied to look for them. That is the secret. If three people can cause so much panic among the most advanced police force in Africa what can 30 do? 300? 3000? 3 million? Surely there are more than 3 million who feel the same as I.

It was a lucky escape, that. What if we had been caught in the house. But then we are not so bad. Years of training paid off. Who was it first noticed movement outside the door. It was A. Yes and then the hammer... and the jump out of the window. Ah, the ankle. No matter, ankle can pain all it wants.

It is almost morning. The night of horror is getting over. Still very cold. A cup of tea? How lucky are they who wake up to cups of tea. Instead of cold, icy drops of dew from grass which is also the bed. Perhaps that car seems the right one for getting a lift.

Hello... *matatu*? yes, it is stopping. What a lucky break. Ha, ha, right under the nose of the whole police force... escape. Escape?

“*Haramu! Shetani!*” So you were hiding the whole night out in the open, while we combed every village. Terrorist! Communist! Call your Mwakenya to save you now. You are headed straight to graveyard, you bastard. Hiding from us? Railway sabotage? Who gave you the courage? Wait until you feel the salted *kibokos*... Ha, waiting for a *matatu*, were you? Ha, ha, you must laugh with us... what luck. Falling into the lap of the police. Whole night of search did not disclose your forgotten face, but the day breaks and you limp straight into lion’s mouth. There is surely a promotion in this turn of events. Worth a few *shillings*, this miserable body with broken leg.”

The loud crash of the *rungu* hitting the broken ankle shatters the early morning silence.

Before the hammer strikes...

4.00 a.m. Long day of hard work. Preparations for meeting comrades tomorrow. It is an early morning meeting. All papers are ready. Now for a few hours of sleep, before the work continues in the morning. But the mind refuses to

sleep, though body is tired... so tired. What prospects for peaceful change? Will gun factories be the only solution? Years of hard work, hiding, running, and the years in solitary cells of Kamiti. Better to die on your feet... What did Kimaathi feel when he was hanged? Regrets that all sacrifice of blood led to no more than “forgive and forget” betrayal? Or pride that sheer determination, organisation and sacrifice in forests and towns dislodged colonialism. Regrets, perhaps, that the roots of exploitation had not been destroyed from the soil of Kirinyaga yet. The body dies, Kimaathi is no more, but his example, sacrifice and ideas continue to inspire youth even today. The example will never die, even if history is banned... even if his remains are hidden... even if no monuments to his memory exist.

Without warning, the door is knocked down. Civilian-clothed thugs rush into the house. All lights go off, but they know what they want, they know where their victim is. Neighbours are locked in, street is still, nobody dares move. Agents of repression have descended like evil spirits. They cannot allow the small body of Karimi to live the life of resistance, life of struggle. It was not enough to beat his broken knee, not enough to lock him up in solitary cell of Kamiti. This spirit of resistance cannot be contained in four walls. The ultimate sacrifice has to be made.

Here they come... the moment I imagined years ago, in prison, on a lonely, cold night, the moment is here... any way to escape? What about the papers and letters... no, nothing that is of value here. The discipline, the *nidhamu* has ensured nothing incriminating remains. Yet what is there to hide? Let them see all the wealth of work that goes on in this room, in this head. Let them know that we are not all dumb sheep... even sheep protest... not even the animal dies without a struggle. So what is there to hide. Change is inevitable, change, like death is inevitable; death like change is inevitable. Better to die on your feet...

The *panga*... was it a *panga* or a hammer. The arm is cut, the arm tries to defend the brain... it is the brain that they are after, it is the brain they want to smash, not the ankle, not the arm, their objection is to the brain... it is the thoughts in the brain that have to be stopped with a hammer blow... It is the brain that directs the arm. It must be stopped, stopped for ever. But just one minute, one minute more, one more thought, one more act of resistance, before the hammer strikes...

Shiraz Durrani

November 23, 1997

Further Readings on Karimi Nduthu:

Karimi Nduthu: A Life In The Struggle (1998). London/New York: Vita Books/
Mau Mau Research Centre. ISBN 1-869886-12-7.

Karimi Nduthu was brutally assassinated by agents of the Moi dictatorship on the 23rd of March, 1996. Karimi was a revolutionary jewel, firmly embedded in the purest forms of the Kenyan tradition of patriotic resistance. His very name denotes resistance against natural and human predators. His actions place him in the anti-imperialist resistance tradition set in motion by Yusuf bin Hassan who courageously fought against the Portuguese in the 17 century and by those like Waiyaki wa Hinga, Me Katilili, Koitalel, Kimaathi, Pio Gama Pinto who fought against British imperialism.

It is the assimilation of these pure and selfless traditions for liberation and freedom that guided his actions as a Mwakenya activist, a political prisoner, and a human rights advocate. Karimi said NO to the continued division of the African people into warring ethnicities. But he said YES to the unity of Kenyan people, their collective strength, their will to struggle for a National Democratic Revolution as the only basis for a new era of unity, freedom and justice.

They finally came for him at midnight of 23rd March 1996, after shadowing him for many weeks. One of them had rented a room a couple of doors away from Karimi's room. This is where the murder squad always met...they emerged as an arm of the Moi regime in 1991...

Appendix A

The Struggle For Kenya's Future (1972)

Reproduced from:

Barnett, Donald (1972): Kenya: Two Paths Ahead. Reproduced from

Muchai, Karigo (1973): The Hardcore. Richmond, BC, Canada:
LSM Information Centre.

As part of a collective effort by several Kenyans and myself [Donald Barnett], the following article was written, mimeographed and distributed at the Kenya African National Union (KANU Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya in December 1961.

The struggle for Kenya's future is being waged today on three distinct though interrelated levels -political, racial and economic. It seems to us that we Africans are being allowed to "win" in the first two spheres as long as we don't contest the battle being waged on the third, all-important economic level.

Since the end of the Second World War, Great Britain, knowing it could not contain the wave of nationalist revolutions spreading throughout the colonial world, has embarked on a course of "guiding" these nationalist movements down a path most conducive to the perpetuation of British and multinational capitalist economic domination. The old colonialism involving direct political control is fast dying and a quick transition to the new colonialism for which the United States had framed such an admirable model in Central and South America is felt necessary to avert a *genuine* social revolution, which would result in economic as well as political independence and thus stop the flow of Kenya's surplus capital into the banks of the western capitalist world. The British Master Plan is thus quite simple in outline: "Carefully relinquish political control to a properly indoctrinated group of the "right kind" of Africans, i.e., those whose interests are similar to and compatible with our own, so that we retain economic control." In short, the British Government wants to leave in political *form* so that its capitalist "sponsors" might remain in economic *content*. Put into slogan form, this plan would be: LEAVE IN ORDER TO STAY.

What are the techniques being employed by the British to facilitate our transition from colonial to neo-colonial status, Though they are many, we shall here mention two of the most important. First is a technique which might be called *Racial Harmony: A Disguise for the Recruitment of African Stooges and*

frontmen.

Realizing that their old set of economic policies and privilege for European settlers and non-African businessmen had resulted in the almost complete absence of Africans within the middle class, the British Government undertook hurried plans to recruit Africans to economic positions which would allow them to become the spokesmen for this class. It was necessary, in brief, to sufficiently break down the colour barriers so as to allow the formation of a “multiracial” economic front whose spokesmen would have black faces even while its planners and largest profit makers remained European and Asian. They proceeded to allow us freehold titles to our land and the right to grow certain cash crops, such as Arabica coffee, so that an African landholding group might emerge which, employing cheap African labour just as their European counterparts, would find its interests identified with the capitalists of the dominant economic group. Today, in addition to the resettlement scheme, we are bombarded with talk of mergers between the Kenya National Farmers’ Union (KNFU) and the African Farmers and Traders Association; between the African, Asian and European Chambers of Commerce, and even between African and European Medical Associations. These intended mergers are clear evidence of a calculated plan (revealed most boldly by Blundell and Delamere during a recent meeting of the KNFU) on the part of the economic elite to partially dissolve racial barriers in order to consolidate its position along class lines and to use Africans as frontmen and spokesmen for its interests.

“Africanization” is the term used for the process by which selected Africans are being recruited to executive or bureaucratic posts and thus acquiring a vested interest in the status quo - an interest it shares with a growing number of businessmen, professionals and prosperous farmers and which manifests itself in a desire for “economic stability” and the rule of “law and order”. All these moves parade themselves, of course, as signs of the coming racial harmony, as humanitarian gestures reflecting a genuine change of heart among the avowed European racists.

Interestingly enough, we hear our African colleagues shouting that they want to “stabilize” an economy of poverty and wage-slavery for the masses and to perpetuate a body of “law and order” which acts as the moral and militant protector of those who currently control this economy. Aren’t they aware that this economy they wish to “stabilize” is at the root of Kenya’s present backward economic condition, shipping abroad or spending on lavish consumption the surplus capital generated yearly by our labour? Don’t they know that in times

of crisis, when their economic interests are threatened by the imminence of sweeping social changes, the reactionary elements of countries throughout history have taken refuge and attempted to consolidate their forces under the banners of “law and order” and the need for “stability”? Don’t they know from their own experiences in Kenya’s recent revolutionary effort and the British repression that some of the gravest crimes of man against man are committed under the banner of “law and order”?

Let us investigate this body of law and decide whether we want the system of economic inequality which it protects through the maintenance of order. At present we are merely echoing the slogans put forward by those who stand to lose by our gains, who are now profiting by a system which exploits us; who, in fact, drafted and imposed that very body of law which our people are daily forced to follow in unbearable degradation and humiliating poverty. Let us instead struggle against a “stability” which is in fact stagnation; let us struggle to liberate that vast reservoir of creative ability which now lies dormant amongst our people; let us, in short, create a new society which allows to each man the right to eat, the right to the products of his labour, the right to clothe, house and educate his children, the right, in short, to live in dignity amongst equals. It is a socialist society we should be struggling to build, a system which, unlike capitalism, concerns itself with the welfare of the masses rather than with the profits and privileges of a few.

A second technique being utilized so that our rulers might “leave in order to stay” can be called *Nationalism: A Colonialist Substitute for Ideology*. Nationalism is essentially a negative philosophy based on strong popular feelings, demanding freedom from foreign political domination. It is no substitute for a positive ideology. The British, along with many other colonial powers, have attempted to utilize this negative political slogan (which, by the way, they themselves have popularized) to forestall or hinder the emergence of a revolutionary ideology, which they feared might mean the end of their economic domination. A set of ideas, carefully articulating the Kenya peoples’ present condition and needs and putting forward in bold terms a rational program for Kenya’s future economic development, could not but frighten Kenya’s present and potential capitalist investors. This is so because planning and rationality regarding the economic and social development of a people are not the virtues of an exploitative capitalist system. We see this wherever we find an economically backward country fathered by western capitalism. Whether we look at Kenya, British Honduras or economic dependencies of the United States such as Liberia or Chile, we see the same thing: mass poverty and illiteracy combined with highly

profitable foreign-owned extractive industries in agriculture or minerals.

Nevertheless, our political leaders and other spokesmen plead for more foreign investment, promising to honour existing contracts, protect land rights and maintain the stability we've talked of earlier. They seem willing, in fact, to do almost anything so long as their nationalist's dream of "political" independence is given them. They seem willing to sell everything so that we might inherit a political power stripped of the ability to make far-reaching economic decisions. Political power is essentially a means, an instrument in the hands of a people which entitles them to make decisions regarding their future development. If we are to inherit a government unable to make the vital decisions necessary for our economic development, then political independence will be a shallow victory indeed; the victory of a man who, spotting a great feast ahead, is satisfied with a dry bone thrown by the wayside. Our political leaders who shout nothing but "Uhuru sasa" will be proud and arrogant in their fine clothes and cars on the day our cherished independence arrives; but those who have thrown us this bone will chuckle to themselves, knowing that the real victory was theirs, while our people will face perhaps another decade or more of poverty and deprivation.

Without an ideology for vast social and economic change our politicians are easy game, regardless of their high motives and intentions, for the international corporations. It is difficult to fight something you do not see clearly, and the eyes of our leaders appear blurred by the din and wail of press and radio concerning the coming *Uhuru*, by the unquestioning enthusiasm displayed at the utterance of wilting slogans by the throngs of poor peasants which comprise their following, and by their growing international "status" and the continued invitations by "important" people to cocktails at the New Stanley Hotel. Their lack of sound ideology based on firmly held principles of human worth and dignity will make them easy prey for the foreign industrialist and financier, always ready with an envelope of money in return for political favours. In this kind of atmosphere opportunism rules the day: every man for himself and each with a price, willing to sell his political influence to the highest bidder.

The unity which can be achieved by nationalism alone is weak and thinly covers the many severe antagonisms in our society. Thus in Kenya today, with the goal of Uhuru seen clearly on the road ahead, individuals, tribes and vested interest groups are starting to vie for positions of strength and privilege; with the coming of independence the veneer of unity is smashed and all the latent antagonisms come to the fore. Real unity, you see, cannot be based on a slogan or on an illustrious personality; it can only be achieved by an ideology which

unifies people in a common struggle and program. Let us then fashion an ideology which will unify the vast majority of our people by articulating their needs and by advancing a program of socialist development in agriculture and industry which promises to eradicate poverty, disease and illiteracy, a program which will draw out the creative talents and energies of our people, giving them that personal dignity and pride which comes from socially constructive and productive activity. Let us, in short, provide our people with the ideological and organizational tools necessary for the achievement of genuine independence and development. Let us not sell them cheaply down the glittering path of neo-colonialism and social, economic and cultural stagnation.

Unfortunately, since the above was written, Kenya has unmistakably entered the path of neo-colonial accommodation. The Kenyatta regime, even before the flag-waving independence ceremony of 12 December 1963, had embarked on a course of self-aggrandizing opportunism and blatant disregard for the peasant and worker masses of Kenya. Virtually every warning contained in this article, every “pitfall of national consciousness” Fanon cautioned against in his *Wretched of the Earth*, has been succumbed to in a Kenya which today is the very antithesis of that creative and developing socialist nation hoped for by radical Kenyans in 1961. Leaders of integrity and dedicated to serving the interests of the masses, men such as Pio Gama Pinto, Bildad Kaggia and Oginga Odinga, have been assassinated, deported, imprisoned or harassed and intimidated into silence and accommodation. Kenya is today a police state run by a mafia-like clique of self-serving politicians-cum-businessmen. Jomo Kenyatta, two-time betrayer of the Kenya masses (in 1953-4 at Kapenguria and 1962-3), largest African landowner in Kenya, leader of the new Black bourgeoisie and of the corrupt bureaucratic bourgeoisie which comprises the government, was described to me in 1962 by Pio Pinto - then editor of *Sauti ya Mwafrica* and a top Kenyatta advisor - as simply an “amoral man“. Pinto was assassinated by the regime on 24 February 1965 and Kenya has yet to replace him.

Toward those like Karigo Muchai, whose life history you are about to read, and the thousands of others who fought in the forests, reserves and towns during Kenya’s unsuccessful “Mau Mau” revolt, the Kenyatta regime has shown nothing but scorn and contempt. This became clear in a speech by Kenyatta shortly after his release in 1962. At Githunguri, an African-run teacher training school turned into a butchery during the revolt, where over one thousand Kikuyu were hung by the British forces of law and order, Kenyatta referred to Mau

Mau as “...a disease which has been eradicated and must never be remembered again”. For those who remembered the promises of the revolution, to which the detained “leaders” paid lip service on the eve of “independence”, the repression was swift and severe.

Karari Njama, co-author of *Mau Mau from Within* , described the situation to me in a letter dated 12 July 1965.

The Kenya revolution is now a mere history covered by a sweeping statement that everyone fought for freedom until we grabbed it from the colonial Imperialists - and that no forest fighter should call himself a freedom fighter. This being strongly advocated by the Government shows that the forest fighters’ past service is not appreciated. I am filled with great regret on realization of the fact that the forest fighters’ survivors, the widows and orphans of those who volunteered to sacrifice their lives in order to liberate the Kenya nation from colonial rule, have no place to enjoy the fruits of their fallen parents’ and husbands’ labour. Indeed, many of them are still jobless, landless and as hungry as before. And worse, they are covered by shame because of their participation in our unrecognized fight for freedom. The realization that nobody now admits to having promised them that they could occupy the stolen land if they could get rid of the white settler is a shocking one. The Government has ruled that there is no “free land” and that anyone who wants to occupy land would have either to buy it direct from the settler or from the Government - which will buy it from the settlers and then sell it to peasant farmers. The peasant who succeeds in getting land would then get a loan from the Government to develop his farm.

Please note that last year a number of Mount Kenya forest fighters, who had remained in their hideouts for the last eleven years before independence, returned to the forest and stated that they wouldn’t come out again until they were given free land which they were promised and which they had fought for eleven years. The Government sent its forces to Mount Kenya with authority to shoot them as “enemies of peace”. Their leader and three others were shot dead; the rest surrendered. Government threatened all the other forest fighters, warning them that if they wanted anything free they had better go back to the forests and be prepared to fight against the Government - which was quite strong enough to combat them. One member of parliament criticised the Government for this and he was dismissed from his position as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education. He was rebuked as being anti-Party, anti-Government, anti-President and an advocate of imported Communism.

Karigo Muchai was trying desperately to scratch out a living for himself and his

family when I met him in Nairobi in February 1962. Without land, without a job, he was making charcoal in the forest and selling it as a mini-trader on the streets of the city. His life history was taped in Kikuyu then translated into English by Ngugi Solomon Kabiro, another Kenyan whose life history you will read in this series. I am responsible for editing the final draft of this English version.

The story of Karigo Muchai reveals in simple unreflective terms the experiences, struggles and sacrifices of a Kikuyu peasant, son of a squatter on a white settler farm, who joins the peasant-based revolt for Land and Freedom, fights for these objectives until capture, and then spends six cruel years as a *hardcore* in over a dozen detention (i.e. concentration) camps. It is the unrecognized and unrewarded sacrifices of men like Karigo which Karari Njama refers to above. In 1962 Karigo could still hope for "...a decent job or a piece of land to cultivate" in order to provide for his family after independence. "These are the things we Kikuyu fought and died for," he said. "I only pray that after independence our children will not be forced to fight again."

The story of "Mau Mau", Kenya's peasant revolt of 1952-56, as well as its aftermath in the years leading up to and following the "granting" of independence to this British colony, should be studied carefully for the lessons that can be learned from such bitter failures. Political independence without genuine decolonization and socialism yields continued misery and oppression for the peasant-worker masses. Karigo's prayer, as with those of other peasants and workers caught up in the web of neo-colonial accommodation after long years of struggle, will not be answered. His and their children *will* be forced to fight again.

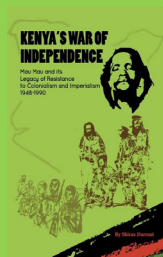
Don Barnett

Vancouver, B. C.

11 September 1972

Class Struggle and Kenya's War of Independence

By
Shiraz Durrani



Book Launch & Inauguration of PALIAct Liberation Library

Celebrating Achievements of Dedan Kimathi and Pio Gama Pinto

February 21, 2018 . Kenya National Theatre



Health Warning

Elephant in the Country

Not seen or heard in “official” Kenya:

- Classes and Class Struggles
- Neo-colonialism, Imperialism
- State and police violence
- Massive looting of land and national resources
- People's resistance

Yet they exist in People's Kenya

Elephant in the room is an English-language metaphorical idiom for an obvious problem or risk that no one wants to discuss, or a condition of groupthink that no one wants to challenge. [1,2]



The Story that baffled the Special Branch

- 1984, Nyayo House: Why write on Kimathi, Pinto, Makhan Singh and not on Kenyatta?
- Even historians are not writing on them. This touches on the security of state. High government people are concerned about this.



The Journey that led to Kenya's War of Independence

THE JOURNEY THAT LED TO KENYA'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

By Shiraz Durrani

121

And the journey continues...

THE JOURNEY THAT LED TO KENYA'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

By Shiraz Durrani

122

The Establishment Rewrites Our History

Forgive and forget our class enemies



Classes and Class Struggles

Colonial violence



Colonialism and imperialism massacre our people, steal our land & resources, kill our leaders, disappear our resistance, rewrite our history and hide their exploitation, oppression and violence.

Kenyan Resistance



In a class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class. Every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class - Mao Tse-Tung (1937).

Understanding Kenya's Neo-Colonial Reality

The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.

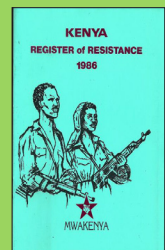
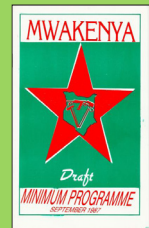
- Nkrumah, Kwame (1965).

Our worker comrades! Come forward! March ahead! If you do not march ahead today, then remember that you will be crushed under the heels of capitalists tomorrow. Workers should have a united stand and should stand up strongly against the capitalists so that they should not ever have the courage to attempt to exploit workers again, nor to take away workers' rights from them.

- Labour Trade Union of Kenya. 29-11-1936.

Class Oppression and Class Struggles

Political independence exposes the internal class contradictions - class oppression and class struggle - more clearly. The danger is that these are interpreted in ethnic, religious and other identities, which are then presented by the political elite to the people as 'principal' contradictions. They are not. They are 'secondary' contradictions among the people, and exploited by the empire for its own ends - Tandon (2017).



So where do we go from here?

*Just as any revolution requires a certain minimum amount of **organization**, a people in revolt requires an **ideology**. Without ideas and ideals, few people are willing to risk their lives in revolutionary action* - Barnett & Njama (1966).

So

Study colonialism, imperialism and resistance.

Turn your anger and ideas into class action.

Organise, Don't Agonise.



The Bottom Line: The status quo MUST GO

“The Kenyan elite, like many in Africa, has not identified or supported our national interests. By keeping us divided, the elite have been able to stay in power by violating our material needs at every turn.

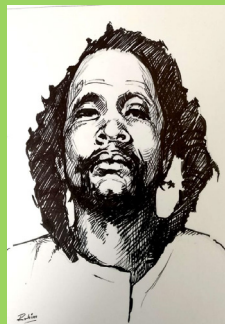
“Competition for political power has become an industry for the elite. Within the national strategic plans and visions, lurk personal plans and visions of the elite on how profits will be made, resources raided, wasted, pillaged, and grabbed. The bottom line is: The status quo Must Go!” - Mutunga (2017).

18

Remembering Dedan Kimathi

“The poor are the Mau Mau. Poverty can be stopped but not by bombs and weapons from the imperialists. Only the revolutionary justice of the struggles of the poor could end poverty for Kenyans”

- Kimathi (1953).



Remembering Pio Gama Pinto

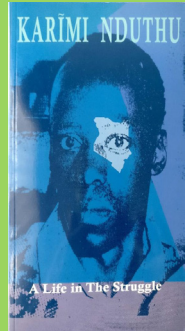
“The sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of Kenya's freedom fighters must be honoured by the effective implementation of the policy - a democratic, African, socialist state in which the people have the right to be free from economic exploitation and the right to social equality. Kenya's uhuru must not be transformed into freedom to exploit, or freedom to be hungry and live in ignorance. Uhuru must be uhuru for the masses - uhuru from exploitation, from ignorance, disease and poverty.”

– Pinto (1963).



Remembering Karimi Nduthu

Change, like death, is inevitable.



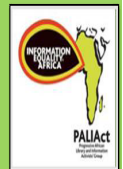
Not the end - Reach for the book

**Hungry man/woman, reach for the
book: it is a weapon.**

- Bertolt Brecht



That is what the PALIAct Liberation Library is all about...



Kenya's War of Independence – the book (1)

- Decades of resistance as war of liberation & independence
- Continuity of resistance before, during and after Mau Mau
- A movement of all people - nationalities, peasants, workers
- Trade unions add class ideology, organisation, activism
- Mau Mau: From petitions to armed, organised resistance
- Aim: Resist colonialism, resist imperialism
- Anti-imperialist ideology, organisation, strategy, leadership
- Liberated territories; governance: courts, taxation
democratic structures, information, equality for women

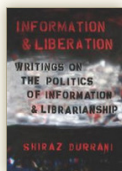
19

Kenya's War of Independence – the book (2)

- 1963: Independence but no liberation
- Imperialism hands power to homeguards it had created
- Massive grab of land and resources by elite. Resistance again
- Pinto murdered, KPU banned: KANU takes all
- Resistance intensifies as does repression
- Underground resistance: December Twelve Movement-
Mwakenya issue *Pambana*, *Draft Minimum Programme*,
Register of Resistance, *Democracy Plank*; Umoja: *Moi's Reign of Terror*
- Conclusion: Uhuru Bado

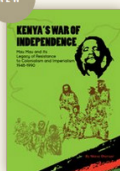
20

Vita Books Publications

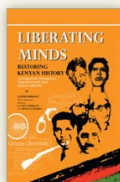


INFORMATION AND LIBERATION
by Shiraz Durrani
Vita Books, Kenya

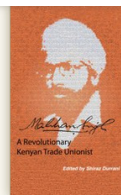
NEW



KENYA'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE
by Shiraz Durrani
Vita Books, Kenya



LIBERATING MINDS, RESTORING KENYAN HISTORY
by Nazmi Durrani
Vita Books, Kenya



MAKHAN SINGH, A REVOLUTIONARY KENYAN TRADE UNIONIST
by Shiraz Durrani
Vita Books, Kenya



NEVER BE SILENT
by Shiraz Durrani
Vita Books, Kenya



PROGRESSIVE LIBRARIANSHIP
by Shiraz Durrani



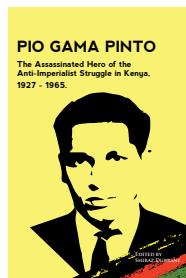
Karimi Nduthu: A Life in the Struggle
Vita Books and Mau Mau Research Center, [1998]

Forthcoming

Pio Gama Pinto, the Assassinated Hero of the Anti-Imperialist Struggle in Kenya, 1927 - 1965. Edited by Shiraz Durrani

Pio Gama Pinto was born in Kenya on March 31, 1927. He was assassinated in Nairobi on February 24, 1965. In his short life, he became a symbol of anti-imperialist struggles in Kenya as well as in Goa in India. He was actively involved with Mau Mau during Kenya's war of independence. He was detained by the British colonial authorities from 1954-59. His contribution to the struggle for liberation for working people spanned two continents - Africa and Asia. It covered two phases of imperialism - colonialism in Kenya and Goa and neo-colonialism in Kenya after independence.

His enemies saw no way of stopping the intense, lifelong struggle waged by Pinto except through an assassin's bullets. But his contribution, his ideas, and his ideals are remembered and upheld even today by people active in liberation struggles.



Pinto in his own words

Kenya's Uhuru must not be transformed into freedom to exploit, or freedom to be hungry and live in ignorance. Uhuru must be Uhuru for the masses – Uhuru from exploitation, from ignorance, disease and poverty (Pinto 1963).

Pinto was assassinated by the regime on 24 February 1965 and Kenya has yet to replace him - Donald Barnett (1972).

Pio Pinto fell on the battlefield in our common war against neo-colonialism. Along with the immortal Patrice Lumumba ... he has joined the ranks of our martyrs whose blood must be avenged. In such honourable company, his death will recruit new armies of Pintos to continue the fight in which he died [in] the effort to create a united socialist Africa - John K. Tettegah. (1966)

ISBN: 978-1-869886-04-2

PALIAct Ukombozi Library

The Progressive African Library and Information Activists' Group (PALIAct) set up the PALIAct Ukombozi Library, in partnership with Vita Books and the Mau Mau Research Centre in Nairobi in 2017. The Library aims to make available progressive material and to encourage reading, study and research by working people in Kenya.

The need for such a library follows from the fact that progressive literature has been generally ignored by most libraries and learning institutions. Young people with passion to bring about improvement in the country and thirsty for materials that would inspire them in their quest for social justice get disappointed as such materials are hard to come by.

The Ukombozi Library has an initial collection of almost a thousand titles of progressive material, mostly books but also pamphlets, videos and photographs. It incorporates December Twelve Movement's underground library set up by Nazmi Durrani in the 1980s. A majority of these are classics which are either out of print or cannot be found in the local bookshops. Other material has been donated by Mau Mau Research Centre, Vita Books and many progressive individuals active in the information struggle in Kenya.

Membership is open to all who agree with the vision and principles of the

library, irrespective of class, ethnicity, religion, gender, region, race or disability. Individuals or institutional membership is available on payment of appropriate fees.

Further information can be obtained from

Progressive African Library and Information Activists (Paliact)

Second Floor, University Way Building Next to Lilian Towers Hotel

P.O Box 746-00200

Nairobi

Email: info.paliact17@gmail.com

Website: <http://vitabooks.co.uk/projects-for-change/paliact/>

Kenya Resists

Vita Books announces the Launch of a new series for 2018

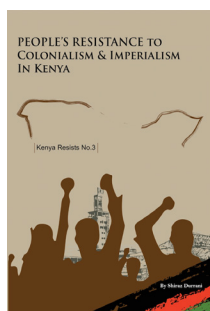
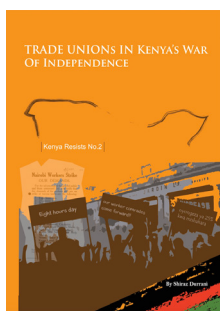
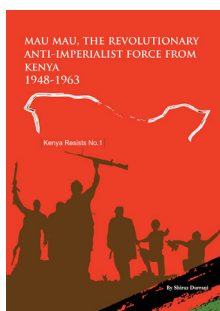
Vita Books is pleased to announce the launch of a new series of handbooks under the title, *Kenya Resists*. The series covers different aspects of the resistance by people of Kenya to colonialism and imperialism. The handbooks are reproduced from published books, unpublished reports, research and oral or visual testimonies.

The series aims to provide an insight into the history of resistance by people of Kenya. Each number focuses on a specific aspect of resistance before and after independence. The first titles in the series has been taken from Shiraz Durrani's book, *Kenya's War of Independence, Mau Mau and its Legacy of Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism, 1948-1990* (Nairobi: Vita Books) and from additional sources. The first 3 titles to be published in 2018 in the series are:

No. 1: Mau Mau, the Revolutionary Force from Kenya Challenges Colonialism and Imperialism, 1948-63.

No. 2. Trade Unions and Kenya's War of Independence. Includes Reflections on Makhan Singh.

No. 3: People's Resistance to Colonialism and Imperialism in Kenya. Includes presentations on Karimi Nduthu.



P.O. Box 62501-00200
Nairobi, Kenya
<http://vitabooks.co.uk>
info.vitabkske@gmail.com

Distributed Worldwide by: African Books Collective
Oxford, OX1 9EN
<http://www.africanbookscollective.com/>

People's Resistance to Colonialism & Imperialism in Kenya

This book looks at the third pillar of resistance to British colonialism – people's resistance, the others being Mau Mau and radical trade union movement. It brings together several aspects of people's resistance to colonialism and imperialism – before and after independence and includes resistance by nationalities, women, students, peasants and workers in what can only be described as people's resistance. While Mau Mau and trade unions were essential in the liberation struggle, on their own they would have faced innumerable difficulties to achieve their goal. Peasants, nationalities, women, children and young people, students, independent churches, independent schools, all played a part in reinforcing the organized and ideology led resistance of Mau Mau and trade unions.

Additional material is included to provide thought for reflections. The first two essays deal with the question of nationalities and with the contradictions between capitalism and socialism with the collapse of USSR. They point to the fact that the struggle in Kenya influences, and is in turn influenced by, developments around the world. The next section is the presentation at the launch of Kenya's War of Independence in Nairobi on February 21, 2018. The final section contains solidarity messages from Shiraz Durrani, Abdilatif Abdalla and Kang'ethe Mungai at the event to commemorate and celebrate the revolutionary work of Karimi Nduthu held on March 24, 2018 at the Professional Centre in Nairobi.

The *Kenya Resists* Series covers different aspects of resistance by people of Kenya to colonialism and imperialism. It reproduces material from books, unpublished reports, research and oral or visual testimonies. The three aspects chosen for the first three publications in the Series – Mau Mau, Trade Unions and People's Resistance – make up the three pillars of resistance of the people of Kenya.



ISBN 978-9966-114-52-5



9 789966 114525